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DIVINE DISCOURSE IN THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS:
AN ENCOUNTER WITH A GOD WHO SPEAKS

Madison N. Pierce

Submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

at Durham University to the Department of Theology and Religion

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DIVINE DISCOURSE IN THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS: AN ENCOUNTER WITH A GOD WHO SPEAKS

Madison N. Pierce

The Epistle to the Hebrews presents God in dialogue. It opens with God speaking through the prophets and the Son in Hebrews 1.1, and then presents words previously attested in Scripture as the speech of God throughout the epistle. By means of prosopological exegesis, an ancient reading strategy with its roots in classical Greco-Roman training, the author interprets these texts by giving them new participants and settings, which produces readings that support his theological program. They do not appear at random, but instead are found in a distinct pattern throughout Hebrews. In the first two sections of Hebrews (1.1–4.16; 4.11–10.25), the Father speaks first, primarily to the Son; then the Son responds to the Father; and finally, the Spirit speaks to the community.

The first chapter of this thesis introduces prosopological exegesis and then discusses the speech of the Father, Son, and Spirit, in chapters 2, 3, and 4 respectively. These chapters discuss the author's use of Scripture, including his utilization of certain ambiguities within Greek traditions of Scripture, and by extension its text-form and the impact of considering these texts as "speech." The fifth chapter discusses the implications of these readings for understandings of the structure of Hebrews in addition to divine and human speech in Hebrews 10.19–13.25. This third section of Hebrews exhibits variations from the patterns above, but may help to draw together the author's three speaking characters. What emerges from this study is a clearer picture of the speaking God in Hebrews. The regular and regulated use of speech throughout the epistle moves the argument forward and is essential to the author's portrayal of God, since it is not just the author's words, but God's as well, that disclose the theological core of this book.

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To Curtis

Thank you for your constant love and support.
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Statement of Copyright

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. No quotation from it should be published without the author's prior written consent and information derived from it should be acknowledged.

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1. Introduction

To claim that the word of God is efficacious is not to assert something new. After all, according to the biblical account, it is with a word that God brings the world into being. When he says, “Let there be light,” there is, and it is good. With a word God establishes an explicit relationship with humanity. In John’s Gospel, the Word *is* God, and the Word becomes flesh. Divine discourse in the New Testament is primarily that of the historical Jesus. But Hebrews opens with the revelation that Jesus *continues* to speak:

God, who formerly spoke to our ancestors in the prophets, in these last days speaks to us in the Son [ἐν υἱῷ] ... (1.1–2)

God speaks through the teaching as well as the being of Jesus, but the latter is defined in part through the speeches of the Father and the Spirit. The God of Hebrews is the God who speaks (*der sprechende Gott*).¹ Moreover, the God who speaks in Hebrews is a God identified as three distinct speakers: Father, Son, and Spirit.² Each one speaks words attested in Scripture in a new context, and each one offers a distinct contribution to the argument of the Epistle to the Hebrews. This study will provide an overview of the contribution of these speeches to the argument

¹ This phrase is owed to Knut Backhaus (see *Der sprechende Gott: Gesammelte Studien zum Hebräerbrief*, WUNT 240 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008]); however, despite the relevance of the title, this monograph exhibits little overlap with the topic of this thesis, apart from a fascinating essay entitled “Gott als Psalmist” (referenced throughout).

² This thesis will refer to “God” when he appears distinct from the Son and Spirit as the “Father” despite the fact that this is not Hebrews’ primary designation. This is primarily for clarity, but also has warrant in the references to Jesus as “Son” in “God’s” divine discourse in Hebrews 1 and 5, as well as two references to Jesus as “Son” in Hebrews 7. Hebrews depicts a conversation between Father and Son.

of Hebrews as a whole and the characterization of these divine speakers who occupy a place of primacy in the epistle.

In the pages that follow I will demonstrate that divine discourse—the speech of God—in Hebrews is essential to the author’s argument and characterization of God. It is through these speeches that he “constructs [his] world.”³ Each chapter will highlight the distinct speech of one character and show how the author constructs the speech of that divine participant in a relatively consistent way. In other words, by grouping the speeches by speaker, rather than chronologically, I can highlight the patterns within the author’s use of this feature. The speakers each play an individual role in the author’s encouragement of his community, and they each have a clear conversation partner within Hebrews. The Father and Son speak primarily to one another. The Spirit speaks to the community.

Each middle chapter discusses the major speeches by each speaking character within Hebrews 1.1–10.18. Within these chapters, I explore the text-form of the quotation in view in Hebrews and its relevant manuscript tradition in Greek traditions of Scripture. The introduction and conclusion section for each speech will locate the quotations within their context in Hebrews, aiming to alleviate any disjunction caused by a more thematically-structured inquiry. My decision to focus on the first two major sections of Hebrews, in accordance with the tripartite model often attributed to Wolfgang Nauck,⁴ is due to the relative consistency within those two sections that is not found within the final third of Hebrews. In the first section, the Father speaks (1.5–13); then the Son (2.12–13); then the Spirit (3.7–4.11). The

³ See Scott D. Mackie, *Eschatology and Exhortation in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, WUNT II 223 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 170. Mackie here is drawing upon John Dunnill, *Covenant and Sacrifice in the Letter to the Hebrews*, SNTSMS (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Luke Timothy Johnson, “The Scriptural World of Hebrews,” *Int* 57.3 (2003): 237–50.

⁴ “Zum Aufbau des Hebräerbriefes,” in *Judentum, Urchristentum, Kirche: Festschrift für Joachim Jeremias*, ed. Walther Eltester, BZNW 26 (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1960), 199–206.

speeches conclude with a significant exhortation on the powerful word of God and the high priest Jesus (4.11–16). In the second section, the cycle of the Father (5.5–6; 7.17, 21; 8.7–12), Son (10.5–7), and Spirit (10.16–17) speaking repeats. This section also concludes with a major hortatory turn (10.19–25). The consistency in order and content will be highlighted with each speech. After all, one of the distinct aims of this study is to show that the author has not merely peppered his epistle with divine discourse: these speeches are crucial to his argumentation.

As with a number of themes,⁵ after the major turn in the discourse in 10.19–25, the author’s use of divine discourse becomes more fluid, and the patterns established in the prior sections appear no more. I will discuss this development in the letter in the final chapter of this study. Let us proceed now to a discussion of the methodology and terminology through which the structure and flow of the project will become clear.

1.1. Terminology and Methodology

The author of Hebrews is a reader of Scripture who stands within a rich trajectory of readers. Two ways that this study will situate Hebrews in relationship to contemporaneous literature are (1) the method through which Hebrews presents Scripture as divine discourse and (2) the implications of that method for later developments in Christian theology. This section serves as an introduction to the program that follows and reveals some of my underlying presuppositions about the author’s theology and worldview. I will, first, outline what I take to be the author’s primary reading strategy and trace its progression from classical Greco-Roman

⁵ The most noteworthy example is perhaps the absence of any major discussion of Christ’s priesthood and offering from 10.25.

education to early Christian literature. Second, I will discuss the potential objection that my construal of Hebrews as a text with three speakers who correspond to the three divine persons in later theology is influenced by some orthodox theological bias. Third, I will discuss the language of “intra-divine” and “extra-divine” discourse as it relates to the chapter titles in my thesis.

1.1.1. Hebrews’ Reading Strategy for Divine Discourse

Our typical medium of intentional communication is speech. While our actions and demeanor provide additional knowledge about our character, often what we say is what we choose to reveal to the outside world. In the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Father, Son, and Spirit speak to one another and to the contemporary audience, revealing themselves to any so privileged to overhear or be addressed. With this portrayal, the author of Hebrews allows them to speak for themselves. It is, after all, one thing for the author to say, “Jesus is God and Lord,” but it is another entirely for *God the Father* to say to Jesus, “You are from the beginning, O Lord” (1.10), and “Your throne, O God, is forever” (1.8). Similarly, although the author appears to have authority within the congregation to which he is writing, his exhortations cannot muster the force of the Spirit’s insistence: “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts” (3.7). While the fact that the author of Hebrews cites Scripture as speech rather than written text has often been noted, the exegetical method used by the author has not been sufficiently examined. This is particularly problematic because the method that Hebrews utilizes has its own set of underlying assumptions that have been obscured.

The ancient exegetical technique known as “prosopological exegesis”⁶ interprets texts by assigning “faces” (πρόσωπα), or characters, to ambiguous or unspecified personal (or personified) entities represented in the text in question.⁷ In other words, interpreters identify participants for clarity of understanding. While some have formulated definitions that refer explicitly to the identification of speakers (e.g., Downs),⁸ it is necessary also to include the identification of addressees and subjects through this technique. Prosopological exegesis does not merely disambiguate but instead views the text through the lens of a new participant. For example, Justin Martyr uses this technique to consider Jesus not only as the speaker of Psalm 22.1 on the cross, as presented in the Synoptic Gospels, but also as the “I” in the entire psalm:⁹

And when the prophetic Spirit speaks from the person of Christ [ἀπο προσώπου τοῦ Χριστοῦ], it is proclaimed in this way: ... “They cast lots for my garment and pierced my hands and feet, but I lie down and sleep and rise again because the Lord has helped me.” And again, when he says, “They spoke with their lips; they shook their head, saying, ‘He must save himself.’” (*1 Apol.* 38.1, 4–6)¹⁰

⁶ Carl Andresen uses the term “prosopographic exegesis” (“Zur Entstehung und Geschichte des trinitarischen Personbegriffes,” *ZNW* 52 [1961]: 1–39), but Marie-Josèphe Rondeau suggests that “prosopological exegesis” should be preferred since “prosopographic” already has an established meaning. See *Les commentaires patristiques du Psautier (IIIe - Ve siècles)*, vol. 2. Exégèse prosopologique et théologie (Rome: Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1985), 8, n. 7. Matthew Bates goes a step further by arguing that “prosopological exegesis presupposes the divine *Logos*...as the ultimate author” (Matthew W. Bates, *The Hermeneutics of the Apostolic Proclamation: The Center of Paul’s Method of Scriptural Interpretation* [Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2012], 218). See also Matthew W. Bates, “Justin Martyr’s Logocentric Hermeneutical Transformation of Isaiah’s Vision of the Nations,” *JTS* 60.2 (2009): 538–55.

⁷ This interpretive method is differentiated from the related rhetorical strategy προσωποποιῶ where an *author* writes from a πρόσωπον. The relationship is most clearly demonstrated by Michael Cameron, *Christ Meets Me Everywhere: Augustine’s Early Figurative Exegesis*, Oxford Studies in Historical Theology (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), esp. 180. Some rhetorical handbooks define προσωποποιῶ as only “personification” (e.g., those attributed to Hermogenes and Nicolaus the Sophist), while others make no distinction between ἐθοποιῶ (“making or imitating characters”) and προσωποποιῶ.

⁸ David J. Downs, “Prosopological Exegesis in Cyprian’s *De Opere et Eleemosynis*,” *JTI* 6.2 (2012): 279.

⁹ The Gospels also portray Jesus as the “I” throughout, but through allusions—a sort of “narrative” prosopological exegesis.

¹⁰ Hebrews also uses this technique to interpret Psalm 22.22 as spoken by Jesus. See §3.1.1. These citations of Justin are translated from Miroslav Marcovich, ed., *Iustini Martyris Apologiae pro Christianis*, PTS 38 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1994).

In the base text, the “I” is unidentified, which provides Justin with the interpretive freedom to assign this text to Christ. The psalm is used to illuminate Christ and his humanity: “the exegete is led to distinguish that which Christ says as a human and to analyze the elements of his personality.”¹¹ Although the word “exegesis” implies a lengthy discussion of the text, that often is not the case, particularly in the earliest examples. One of the most interesting things about this phenomenon is its relative brevity. Simply by assigning a text a new “face,” a dialogical relationship is established where the text assumes previous knowledge of the character, and the character is thus illuminated further by the text. Thus, when the author of Hebrews presents the Father saying to Jesus, “You are my Son; today, I have begotten you” (1.5). He is both illuminating Scripture and teaching his audience about Jesus—the Son of God.

The formula exhibited by the quotation above (ἀπο προσώπου...) along with parallels in Latin and with other prepositions occurs several times in Justin’s writing, as well as in other writers of this time. Although Christ is a common “face” in prosopological exegesis, this technique is by no means limited to christological readings. Justin describes several modes of “hearing” prophecy:

But when you [plural] hear the speech of the prophets spoken as from a character [ὡς ἀπὸ προσώπου], you must not consider it to be spoken from the inspired themselves, but from the divine Word who moves them. For sometimes he declares the things that are to come as one who foretells the future; other times it is proclaimed from the person of God the Lord and Father of all; other times from the person of Christ; and other times as from the person of the people answering its Lord and Father... (*1 Apol.* 36.1–2)¹²

¹¹ “[L]’exégète est amené à distinguer ce que le Christ dit en tant qu’homme et à analyser les éléments de sa personnalité” (Rondeau, *Les commentaires patristiques*, 2:10).

¹² In *Dial.* 36.6, the Holy Spirit speaks “either from the person of His Father or from His own person” (ἢ ἀπὸ προσώπου τοῦ πατρὸς ἢ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἰδίου). This seems to counter Michael Slusser’s suggestion that “the Holy Spirit does not appear as an interlocutor” (“The Exegetical Roots of Trinitarian Theology,” *TS* 49.3 [1988]: 476). See also §4.1 on Hebrews 3.7–4.11.

When Justin assumes his readers will “hear” speech “from a character,” he assumes that they too will see the disjunction or ambiguity in these texts. He shows that prosopological exegesis can occur with divine or human participants. These modes are intended to provide *examples* of the ways that his readers could interpret these texts—these are not the only perceivable characters. So with this statement Justin is both reading these texts and teaching others how to read. The underlying assumption of the latter is key. If Justin thinks they will hear the words “from a character,” then he assumes that prosopological exegesis is something that most of his readers will also be able to practice. But how? Some clues might be found in Greco-Roman educational practices.

Classical Origins of Prosopological Exegesis

Prosopological exegesis, fully developed in patristic authors, likely has some roots in classical rhetorical training (for authors) and literary criticism (for readers). Authors at this time were expected to create characters with a unique and consistent “voice.” In the rhetorical exercises (*progymnasmata*) attributed to Theon, for instance, the author praises Homer for “his ability to attribute the right words to each of the characters he introduces” (sec. 1).¹³ Additionally, the exercises attributed to Hermogenes outline how one might imitate a known character:

you will preserve what is distinctive and appropriate to the persons imagined as speaking and to the occasions, for the speech of a young man differs from that of an old man, and that of one who rejoices from that of one who grieves... (sec. 9).

¹³ George A. Kennedy, ed., *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric*, SBLWGRW 10 (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 4. The translations of Theon and Hermogenes are all replicated from Kennedy.

Based on the characters' "distinctive" and "appropriate" elements, students could practice their skills with "speech in character" exercises. Some prompts from the exercises attributed to Libanius are:

What would Achilles say over the dead Patroclus?
What words would Odysseus say to the Cyclops when he sees him
eating his comrades?
What words would a eunuch say when he falls in love?

After each of these prompts, Libanius offers a short example of the sort of speech to be expected.¹⁴ If part of the education of that time included creating or imitating characters, then by extension might it also include identifying them?

Ancient editions of dramas were written in a very basic form, lacking "identification of the various speakers, stage directions of all sorts, descriptions of the scenes, etc."¹⁵ It was assumed, therefore, that the readers would be able to infer this information themselves. Moving beyond a mere mental note, at some point readers began to write these details "in the margins and between the lines" of their own copies to simplify use.¹⁶ Typically, identifying characters was straightforward, but disagreements are attested. In the *Scholia*, a compilation of readers' notes on these texts (from *σχόλιον*, "comment, interpretation"), occasionally a justification for why a speaker fit a certain piece of dialogue was written next to the identification of the speaker.¹⁷ This suggests that the reader felt obligated to justify the identification of a particular character over another (likely based upon the

¹⁴ See Craig A. Gibson, ed., *Libanius's Progymnasmata: Model Exercises in Greek Prose Composition and Rhetoric*, SBLWGRW 27 (Leiden: Brill, 2008).

¹⁵ René Nünlist, *The Ancient Critic at Work: Terms and Concepts of Literary Criticism in Greek Scholia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 338. See also pp. 338–43 for a more thorough discussion of this background.

¹⁶ Nünlist, *Ancient Critic*, 338.

¹⁷ For example, in *Scholia vetera in Aristophanis Ranas* 1149–1150. See Nünlist, *Ancient Critic*, 339.

elements similar to those noted above in the Hermogenes handbook).¹⁸ Although a direct line from this to prosopological exegesis cannot be drawn, it appears that ancient readers were trained to identify and resolve ambiguities regarding speakers based on their knowledge of the characters acting within the narrative.

Another relevant reading technique evidenced in the *Scholia* is called “solution from the character” (λύσις ἐκ τοῦ προσώπου).¹⁹ When an author was perceived to contradict him/herself, the readers found it necessary to resolve the tension by looking for another speaker. Porphyry, the third-century philosopher, notes that he was not concerned by these so-called contradictions because he reasoned that another voice took over:

No wonder [there are apparent discrepancies] when in Homer different things are said by different voices. Whatever is said by the poet in his own person should be consistent and not contradictory. All the words/ideas he attributes to the characters are not his, but are understood as being said by the speakers. (on *Il.* 6.265)²⁰

So in addition to identifying speakers when changes were indicated (which was often supplied in the text), readers looked for other character changes as indicated by inconsistencies. If a character was speaking in an uncharacteristic way, then it seemed plausible, or perhaps even necessary, to the readers to find a more suitable speaker. These practices among the literary critics to identify ambiguities and tensions in their texts provides a useful parallel for the readers that I will discuss in later portions of this chapter. Christian interpreters perceived ambiguities (within a base text being quoted) and tensions (within the way it was usually interpreted) and

¹⁸ A further complication with regard to these ancient dramas was the absence of a cast (or *dramatis personae*). The reader, not the author, supplied this as well. See Nünlist, *Ancient Critic*, 238.

¹⁹ This is also known as “solution from the poet” (λύσις ἐκ τοῦ ποιητοῦ).

²⁰ Translation via Nünlist, *The Ancient Critic at Work*, 116; see also James I. Porter, “Hermeneutic Lines and Circles: Aristarchus and Crates on the Exegesis of Homer,” in *Homer’s Ancient Readers*, ed. Robert Lamberton and John J. Keaney (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 79.

resolved them by finding a new, more suitable speaker. While this formal training (and its terminology) might be confined to the elite in society, it is likely that these principles would dissipate to the wider public, which is why Justin can assume that his readers would be able to use prosopological exegesis also.

Prosopological Exegesis in the New Testament?

Despite the insistence of patristic scholars that prosopological exegesis could be traced to the New Testament,²¹ most biblical scholars continue to overlook the usefulness of the technique for interpretation; however, some have begun to take note, such as Matthew W. Bates. In his monograph *The Hermeneutics of the Apostolic Proclamation* (2012), Bates identifies several instances of prosopological exegesis within the New Testament, particularly in the Pauline corpus. His primary intent in this monograph is to “[argue] that Paul received, utilized, and extended an apostolic, kerygmatic narrative tradition centered on key events in the Christ story.”²² One way that Paul “extends” his received tradition is by reading Jewish texts through the lens of prosopological exegesis. While Bates’ first major work deals primarily with Paul, his second, *The Birth of the Trinity* (2015),²³ addresses prosopological exegesis in the New Testament more broadly, with a particular focus on how this technique contributed to later Trinitarian theology.²⁴ For example, in Luke 4.16–21 when Jesus reads in the synagogue, he says,

²¹ For example, Andresen, “Zur Entstehung und Geschichte des trinitarischen Personbegriffes”; Rondeau, *Les commentaires patristiques*, 2:21–24.

²² Bates, *Hermeneutics of the Apostolic Proclamation*, 2.

²³ *The Birth of the Trinity: Jesus, God, and Spirit in New Testament and Early Christian Interpretations of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

²⁴ This study, which appeared after the commencement of my work, also notes the use of this reading strategy in Hebrews and writes on several of the texts that I will address in this thesis; Bates, however, by typically grouping texts as read by multiple New Testament authors (e.g., Psalm 2.7 in Hebrews 1.5; Mark 1.11; Luke 3.22; Matt 3.17; Acts 13.32–35) does not address the contribution of this reading strategy to the argument of Hebrews (or any other text) as a whole. Bates and I also disagree at several points on the interpretation of the texts, in particular his denial of the

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to preach release for the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
To send out the oppressed with release,
and to preach the year of the Lord’s favor.”

After this reading, Jesus ends, “Today, this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

According to Jesus’ reading, he is the “I” of the texts who has been anointed. Thus, as Bates notes, the fulfillment of this Scripture to which Jesus refers is not generic but specifically refers to the commencement of his ministry, the first examples of which occur shortly thereafter (4.38–44). In Luke 4, Jesus reads Isaiah 61.1–2 prosopologically, identifying himself as the “I” in this text.²⁵ With this text, Jesus asserts that he has been anointed and empowered by the Spirit of the Lord.²⁶ He confirms his own authority, which will provide an interesting comparison with the Son’s speech in Hebrews. There he primarily accepts authority, rather than declaring it (§3).

Another noteworthy New Testament example of prosopological exegesis is found in Acts 2.25–35. In Peter’s “sermon,” Psalm 15.8–11 LXX is introduced as Jesus speaking through David. Here two participants are clarified— (1) the source and human speaker David and (2) the “character” (or divine speaker) Jesus. Beginning first with the human speaker, Acts introduces this citation with a deliberate and necessary reference to David, despite the attested options of a more anonymous, common formula (Acts 7.42; 15.15: καθὼς γέγραπται) or even a

Spirit’s role as *prosopon* in Hebrews 3.7–4.11 and 10.15–18. For a more thorough review of Bates, see Madison N. Pierce, review of Matthew W. Bates, *Birth of the Trinity, RBECS* (2015), <https://rbees.org/2015/10/17/bt/>. Despite my focus on our differences, I want to make clear that without the work of Matthew Bates and his introduction of this method to New Testament studies, this thesis would be far less rich.

²⁵ Tertullian identifies Jesus as the “I” of this text also in *Adversus Praxeas* 11.

²⁶ See Bates, *The Birth of the Trinity*, 94–95.

general reference to the Psalms (Acts 1.20: γέγραπται γὰρ ἐν βίβλῳ ψαλμῶν; cf. 13.33). But the reference to a particular person is necessary for Peter's interpretation.²⁷ In the psalm, the "I" is certain that God will not "abandon him in Hades" or "allow his flesh to see corruption." But "David...both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day" (2.29). Without tying this interpretation to a person whose death was known by the audience, the tension is not obvious. Moreover, the christological reading does not resolve tension, but instead creates it. For Peter, since David *is* dead, another way to read this text must be sought, which is why he suggests that David's text was actually spoken by (or "with regard to" [εἰς]; Acts 2.25) the Messiah:

Foreseeing this, he [David] spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, saying, "He will not be abandoned to Hades, nor will his flesh experience corruption." (2.31)²⁸

To resolve this apparent discrepancy, Peter suggests that the character is another "anointed one" (i.e., someone other than David) who will not see corruption, namely Jesus. As evidence for this interpretation, he offers only a parallel reading of Psalm 109.1 LXX, again utilizing the tension with the usual reading that names David as the speaker.²⁹ Peter provides little explanation on this second text, but the author likely assumes his readers know of Jesus' interpretation of this text in Acts' "prequel," the Gospel of Luke. There Jesus says that David spoke the same psalm (110 [109 LXX]) about the Messiah. He concludes, "David thus calls him Lord; so how can he be his son?" (Luke 20.44; cf. Mark 12.37; Matt 22.45). This

²⁷ I use "Peter" because he is portrayed as the orator and originator of this interpretation.

²⁸ This could also be indirect speech. See W. Bauer et al., eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 731–32.

²⁹ "For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says..." (Acts 2.34). Acts 13.35 offers a reading of this text that regards Jesus as the subject, but does not claim he is the speaker. This complementary (not contradictory) reading offered by Paul in Acts, when compared with this reading by Peter, might represent the diverse characterization of Peter and Paul in this text.

interpretation highlights a potential problem with another (common) reading of the text: King David would not call his son, or perhaps even another person, “Lord,” which means this must, by their estimation, be a text about the Messiah that was announced by God. As we shall see, this is precisely the sort of tension that underlies much of the prosopological exegesis found in Hebrews.³⁰

Patristic Prosopological Exegesis

As previously mentioned, this exegetical technique is more fully developed in patristic literature.³¹ In these texts, prosopological introductory formulas are often found, unlike in the New Testament, and readers interpret in the character of many dramatic πρόσωπα. Augustine, for example, has countless prosopological readings in his *Enarrations on the Psalms*. This text, like a modern commentary, works through most verses of the Psalms one-by-one. Augustine discusses each with careful thought, particularly with regard to the character portrayed by each verse, or even each clause. For this reason, the *Enarrations* provide a rare insight into the thought behind prosopological readings.³² One particularly useful example is his discussion of Psalm 3 (which Justin also read prosopologically in *1 Apol.* 36, cited above). In the course of this short (8-verse) psalm, Augustine argues that 2 or 3

³⁰ Prior to Bates, Amy Peeler also raised the possibility that Hebrews was utilizing this technique, though she concludes this is “quasi-prosopographic exegesis” (*You Are My Son: The Family of God in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, LNTS 486 [London: T&T Clark, 2014], 31–37).

³¹ By “fully developed” I refer to the deliberate use of this technique (i.e., with an introductory formula and explicit identification of a πρόσωπον). Similar practice is also attested in targumic exegesis: “Who speaks, and to whom, are two of the most basic elements in the make-up of a speech situation. The positions of speaker and addressee regularly engage the interest of the targumists in their interpretation of biblical speech reports” (see Alexander Samely, *The Interpretation of Speech in the Pentateuch Targums: A Study of Method and Presentation in Targumic Exegesis*, TSAJ 27 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992], 9).

³² For a useful overview of Augustine’s exegesis, see Cameron, *Christ Meets Me Everywhere*. These ecclesiological interpretations are found in Pss 3, 25, 41, 75, 92. For a survey of prosopological exegesis in a number of patristic authors, see Rondeau, *Les commentaires patristiques*, vol. 2. Exégèse prosopologique et théologie.

persons are represented, beginning with his argument that this is not a psalm in the person of David:

The words, “I slept and took rest and rose, for the Lord will take me up,” lead us to believe that this psalm is to be understood as in the person of Christ, for they sound more applicable to the Passion and Resurrection of the Lord than to that history in which David’s flight is described from the face of his rebellious son.³³

Those that rise up against him are his “persecutors” (Ps 3.1), and when he cries out to the Lord, it is in prayer (3.5 citing Matt 6.6). But Augustine finds a strange tension with his christological interpretation in 3.5b (“he answers me from his holy mountain”). If Christ is the mountain, as he is in Daniel 2.34–35, then this answer must not be heard as coming from the person of Christ. Then Psalm 3.6 is the proof with which Augustine began (“I sleep and take rest...”), so this verse is in the person of Christ. So the result is something like this:

Christ: “My voice cries out to the Lord...” (3.5a)
[*Psalmist*: “And he hears me from his holy mountain [i.e., Christ].” (3.5b)]
Christ: “I sleep and take rest and awaken again because the Lord supports me.” (3.6)

This shows the fluidity with which this reading strategy could be adopted. Within only two sentences, two shifts take place.³⁴ Later, after working through the entire of text of the psalm, Augustine offers an alternative proposal. This could be from the person of Christ on behalf of the Church:

In the prophet then at once, the Church and her Head...speaks, “O Lord, how are they multiplied that trouble me!”

³³ Augustine’s comment about the Davidic context of this psalm refers to its superscription: “A Psalm of David, since he escaped from the presence of Absalom, his son” (LXX).

³⁴ While this type of commentary on shifts in person does not take place in the New Testament, this could be a useful insight into some of the boundaries for the author’s citations (see, e.g., the discussion of Hebrews 1.10–12 in §2.1.4).

So Augustine allows for two possible readings of the psalm. In one option, Christ speaks along with the prophet (in 3.4b), but in the other, Christ speaks as himself and as one who speaks on behalf of the Church.

Since prosopological exegesis typically is applied to texts with certain features (e.g., ambiguities or unspecified participants), readings of some texts are particularly common in authors using this strategy (e.g., Greek Psalm 109.1). One text found in Justin, Irenaeus, and Eusebius is Genesis 18–19.³⁵ In this narrative, Abraham sees three men at his tent (18.2). After revealing that Abraham and Sarah will have a child (18.11–15), the Lord tells Abraham about his plan for Sodom and Gomorrah (18.20–21). Abraham attempts to intercede for any righteous ones who remain there, but this is of course futile—not even ten righteous people remain (18.22–33). Then, the narrative moves to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and all those within its gates (19.1–29). Prosopological readings focus on a curious feature: the two lords.³⁶ Genesis 19.24 LXX reads, “and the Lord rained down sulfur and fire from the Lord from heaven.” Justin assumes that, after speaking with Abraham (18.33), the Lord goes down to Sodom and Gomorrah, as he said (18.20–21). So in 19.24 one Lord is in the cities, while the other is in the heavens. The first Lord, Justin argues, is Jesus:

“And now, do you not understand, friends, that the one of the three, who is both God and Lord, and serves him who is in the heavens, is Lord of the two angels? Since when they enter Sodom, he remains in conversation with Abraham in what is recorded by Moses. Then when he departed after the conversation, Abraham returned to his place. When [the Lord] went into Sodom, the two angels no longer conversed with Lot but he [did], as the word [ὁ λόγος] reveals, and he

³⁵ Some have argued that Justin influenced Irenaeus. For this and a discussion of this reading in Eusebius, see Rondeau, *Les commentaires patristiques*, 2:29; ch. 3. Slusser also discusses Justin’s reading; see Slusser, “The Exegetical Roots of Trinitarian Theology,” 266–67.

³⁶ Rabbinic literature also makes attempts to understand how two lords can be in view. For a more thorough discussion of this and other texts that were considered “dangerous” (since they often led to the “two powers heresy,” see Alan F. Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven: Early Rabbinic Reports About Christianity and Gnosticism*, SJLA 25 (Leiden: Brill, 1977).

is the Lord, who received this from the Lord who is in the heavens,
that is to say the maker of all things, to inflict upon Sodom and
Gomorra what the word recounts, thus saying: “The Lord rained...”
(*Dial.* 56.22–23)

In what follows, Trypho, after discussing a few minor points of the story, agrees with Justin’s exegesis. Thus, whether Trypho is real or imagined, Justin assumes, like his New Testament predecessors, that a prosopological reading strategy is valid and useful for a true understanding of the biblical text. The relative lack of commentary in the New Testament in particular seems to suggest that these arguments were intuitive and accessible even to those who had not received a formal classical education. If so, then the ubiquity of prosopological readings (and other similar strategies) in patristic literature is not surprising.³⁷

Prosopological Exegesis and Divine Persons

Some have suggested that prosopological exegesis helped to introduce “person” (πρόσωπον or *persona*) language into early Christian discussions of the Trinity. Although now several scholars have commented on this method in the works of specific patristic authors, the first significant discussion of this exegetical technique was Carl Andresen’s 1961 article, “Zur Entstehung und Geschichte des trinitarischen Personbegriffes.”³⁸ In it, Andresen shows Tertullian’s dependency on the Apologists and New Testament writers for his Trinitarian concept of person, as well as his methodology—particularly his use of prosopological exegesis. To those

³⁷ The Gnostics also utilized this reading strategy. For an overview of Irenaeus’ treatment of Gnostic prosopological readings, see Stephen O. Presley, “Irenaeus and the Exegetical Roots of Trinitarian Theology,” in *Irenaeus: Life, Scripture, Legacy* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 165–71. This essay also suggests that the appropriation of this technique by Gnostic exegetes accounts for the scarcity of this strategy in Irenaeus.

³⁸ See n. 6 of this chapter for full citation. For other affirmations of Andresen’s work and his claims about the origins of Trinitarian theology, see Presley, “Irenaeus and the Exegetical Roots”; Slusser, “The Exegetical Roots of Trinitarian Theology,” as well as Bates, *Hermeneutics of the Apostolic Proclamation*; Bates, *The Birth of the Trinity*.

who think that reading the “Trinity” into the New Testament is problematic, Andresen warns that neglecting the origins of this technique “would mean the abandonment of a derivation of Tertullian’s concept of person from its exegetical principles and with that the insight into the fundamental biblical basis of his doctrine of the Trinity.”³⁹ The “fundamental biblical basis of his doctrine of the Trinity,” which Andresen links to Psalm 109, is found in part in Hebrews.

To distinguish between different persons, Tertullian uses the conversation among the Father, Son, and Spirit as an indication of distinction. In defense of the “Trinity” and that the three persons are shown to be “distinct, not separate”

(*distincte...*, *non divise*), he writes:

I allege that the Father said to the Son, “You are my Son; today I have begotten you.” If you will have me believe that the Father himself is also the Son, show me that it is stated elsewhere in this form, “The Lord said to himself, ‘I am my Son; today I have begotten myself.’”...Observe also the Spirit speaking in the third person concerning the Father and the Son: “The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies the footstool of your feet.’”...So in these texts, few though they be, the distinctiveness of the Trinity is clearly expounded: for there is the Spirit himself who makes the statement, the Father to whom he makes it, and the Son of whom he makes it... (*Prax.* 11)⁴⁰

In Tertullian’s reading of Greek Psalms 2.7 and 109.1, he considers the dialogue among these persons to be evidence of their distinction.⁴¹ If God were speaking to himself, he posits, would the pronouns not reveal this? As it happens, these two texts also both occur in Hebrews with evidence of a similar reading strategy.

³⁹ “...würde den Verzicht auf eine Ableitung des tertullianischen Personbegriffs aus seinen exegetischen Voraussetzungen und damit auf die Einsicht in die für Tertullian elementare biblische Begründung seiner Trinitätslehre bedeuten.” (“Zur Entstehung und Geschichte des trinitarischen Personbegriffes,” 20).

⁴⁰ The basis for this translation is Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem*, ed. Ernest Evans (London: SPCK, 1948).

⁴¹ Likewise, in *Prax.* 23, he says, “the Father answers the Son from heaven... ‘This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Hear him.’...How many persons do you think there are, self-opinionated Praxeas, if not as many as there are voices? You have the Son on earth; you have the Father in heaven. That is not separation, but a divine ordination [*non est separatio ista, sed dispositio divina*].”

Almost twenty-five years after Andresen, Marie-Josèphe Rondeau published a two-volume analysis of patristic commentaries on the Psalms. The second volume focuses primarily on prosopological exegesis, and it remains the most thorough treatment of this phenomenon to date. Rondeau begins this volume with a quotation from Hilary of Poitiers, a fourth-century Bishop, which in many ways substantiates her work:

The principal question for understanding the Psalms is to be able to discern on whose behalf one understands the words to be spoken, or to whom they are spoken. (*In Ps.* 1.1)⁴²

This basic interpretative question to which Hilary refers made reading the Psalms a difficult, yet rewarding task. Christian interpreters had the opportunity to read Scriptural texts through a christological lens, asking what these Jewish texts meant in light of the Christ-event.

Following Andresen, Rondeau asserts that the concept of person, vital to discussions of the Trinity, arose from this exegetical tradition. Rondeau boldly claims in her introduction that “the use of the prosopological method, where *prosōpon/persona* is a key word, is the immediate source of the Trinitarian use of *persona*.”⁴³ Yet if the method were the source of the use of *persona* for patristic authors, the antecedent exegesis in the New Testament would need to exhibit introductory formulas with *προσῶπον*, but it does not. Therefore, it seems instead that the “divine discourse” exhibited in the New Testament provided these later authors with the conceptual framework to understand these speakers as individual persons, and from this, they were able to articulate their concept of person. In her conclusion Rondeau makes a similar, but more tempered, claim:

⁴² Via Rondeau, *Les commentaires patristiques*, 2:7.

⁴³ “[L]’usage de la méthode prosopologique, où *prosōpon/persona* est un mot clé, est la source immédiate de l’emploi trinitaire de *persona*” (*Les commentaires patristiques*, 2:12).

the major contribution of the prosopological method resides without a doubt in the introduction, or the contribution to the introduction, of the word person in theology. The method operates with individuals likely to interact and particularly privileges the one who says “I,” as evidenced by the fact that the key formula is the formula *ex persona*, whereby one detects the speaker. The person is defined, therefore, as someone who speaks.⁴⁴

Thus speech is likely the primary indicator to these later writers that the Father, Son, and Spirit are distinct persons. If they can be in conversation with one another, then they are not the same person, which corresponds to Tertullian’s exegesis above. Of course, this “person” language is not applied to God in the Epistle to the Hebrews or elsewhere in the New Testament, and thus these assumptions are only implicit in the exegesis of this earlier time period; however, it seems that the characters identified via prosopological exegesis in Hebrews are also personal, distinct entities. As we shall see, it is principally the Father, Son, and Spirit who speak in Hebrews. The fact that this author uses prosopological exegesis with regard to these three participants certainly supports the conclusions of those (e.g., Andresen) who suggest that later Trinitarian theology was the result of biblical interpretation. This is not to suggest that fourth-century Trinitarianism is explicitly defended or espoused in Hebrews, but an assent to the suggestion that the use of “Trinitarian” or “the Trinity” with regard to Hebrews in a minimalist way would be appropriate.

⁴⁴ “Mais l’apport majeur de la méthode prosopologique réside sans doute dans l’introduction, ou la contribution à l’introduction, du mot personne dans la théologie. La méthode opère sur des individus susceptibles de dialoguer et privilégie tout particulièrement celui qui dit “je,” comme le prouve le fait que la formule clé est la formule *ex persona*, par laquelle on détecte le locuteur. La personne se définit donc comme quelqu’un qui parle” (*Les commentaires patristiques*, 2:390–91). In later debates, Irenaeus in particular will use the fact that the Spirit or God spoke *ex sua persona* as evidence of the claim’s credibility (e.g., *Haer.* 3.9.1). I am indebted to Clift Ward for this point.

Identifying Prosopological Exegesis

With several examples of prosopological exegesis in mind, it is now possible to discuss criteria for determining when this exegetical technique is being used. While Rondeau outlined only one criterion for prosopological exegesis—the text must be in first-person speech—more specific criteria would be helpful. More recently, Matthew W. Bates constructed two more thorough lists, which provide several useful features, such as his emphasis on the resolution of ambiguities as the key aim of prosopological exegesis, but the organization of this material is not entirely clear.⁴⁵ I propose a rearrangement of Bates’ work (with some minor alterations) that still consists of two lists, but with one list of features that the base text must possess paired with another list of features that might be found in the interpretation—the prosopological exegesis.

When identifying prosopological exegesis, one first needs to analyze the base text (BT) being quoted by the interpreter. It should have the following features: (BT1) the text in question will be speech. Although the speech will often be in the first person, this is not always the case (e.g., Deut 32.43 in Heb 1.6). (BT2) The text must contain some lack of specificity with regard to participants. Sometimes this causes a lack of consensus regarding the speaker of a text (e.g., Greek Psalm 21), and other times it results in a perceived tension because the common interpretation presents a logical challenge for the Christian interpreter (e.g., Greek Psalm 109).

⁴⁵ His two lists are labeled: “pre-conditions” and “criteria.” The prior are: (1) the base text must have at least one ambiguous participant; (2) the interpretation must resolve at least one ambiguity; and (3) the base text must be a sacred text. Another confusing component in this section of Bates’ work is the continuous numbering (represented by the list above), but differing categorizations before each item is listed. For example, (1) is a “pre-condition”; (2) is the “*sine qua non* of PE”; and (3) is given to “restrict the definition.” I have chosen “pre-conditions” as a representative label (*Hermeneutics of the Apostolic Proclamation*, 216–19). The criteria that Bates lists are: (1) the base text in question must be direct speech; (2) the interpretation must resolve an actual, not just apparent, ambiguity; (3) the interpretation might have a prosopological introductory formula; and (4) the interpretation might be suggested by another relatively contemporaneous author (pp. 219–20).

(BT3) Finally, the text will have classic and/or canonical status; it must be a text that the community deems worthy of discussion.⁴⁶

If the base text possesses the criteria above, then the prosopological exegesis (PE) can be analyzed for the following elements: (PE1) The prosopological exegesis must identify an unspecified participant of the base text in a way that is not obviously indicated by a plain reading. (Usually, the speaker is clarified, but in some instances it is the addressee, subject, or some combination of the three.) In other words, the interpretation must introduce a new element to the text not otherwise clear from the original text itself.⁴⁷ This feature is the only one essential to prosopological exegesis, but two other criteria confirm the phenomenon. Namely, (PE2) the presence of an introductory formula with *προσώπον* is a clear indicator that prosopological exegesis is taking place. Further, (PE3) finding a similar interpretation in another text might indicate that other readers accepted this interpretation or read the text in the same fashion. In patristic exegesis, it would be common for all of these elements to be present. My evaluation of prosopological exegesis in Hebrews will focus on the author's identification of unspecified participants. I find this necessary since New Testament authors never use a (PE2) prosopological introductory formula, and (PE3) similar readings are an external characteristic. Thus, some of my discussion will be devoted to the tension or ambiguity that the author of Hebrews in particular sought to resolve. When he, for example, asserts that Jesus is the speaker of Isaiah 8.17–18 in Hebrews 2.12–13, he

⁴⁶ This feature is somewhat self-evident—texts being interpreted are valuable to the community and thus merit attention; however, I want to highlight that “canonical” here holds the broader meaning of “authoritative” (e.g., the poetry of Homer) and is thus not restricted to the “canonical” texts of Scripture.

⁴⁷ Bates, helpfully, also makes this point (*Hermeneutics of the Apostolic Proclamation*, 219).

is identifying the new, mysterious speaker found in Greek traditions.⁴⁸ When he reads this curious speech, he hears the voice of Christ. These prosopological readings occur throughout Hebrews, but the primary characters that speak are limited to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. In the next section, I will show how these instances of divine discourse are integral to the structure of Hebrews and to its overall purpose.

1.1.2. One Speaker in Three Persons: Father, Son, and Spirit

My decision to focus on the Father, Son, and Spirit as divine participants might appear to be the product of a theological (and particularly Trinitarian) bias, but these three are the ones portrayed as the primary speakers in Hebrews. Surveying the introductory formulas to the thirty plus citations from Scripture in Hebrews reveals that it is only these three who speak in a present, even occasionally timeless, way—at least until the close of the letter (§5.4). Examining the few occasions when others speak in Hebrews confirms this. The first instance is Hebrews 2.6–8. Here the choice of the anonymous speaker of Psalm 8 is intentional, not an attempt to distance the text from the person involved in its production.⁴⁹ With this device, the author accomplishes two things of note for this study: (1) he provides a speaker who can speak on behalf of all humanity, and (2) in a sense, he limits timeless or present discourse to divine agents. The only other named speaker in Hebrews is Moses. He is quoted twice:

⁴⁸ Verse 16 of the MT reads: צור תַּעֲוֹדָה הַחֹם תִּנְחָה בְּלִמְדִּי, which is followed in verse 17 by וְהִפְתִּי לִיהוָה. Verses 16–17a of the LXX read: Τότε φανεροὶ ἔσονται οἱ σφραγιζόμενοι τὸν νόμον τοῦ μὴ μαθεῖν. καὶ ἐρεῖ...

⁴⁹ *Contra* Gareth Lee Cockerill, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 44, n. 194; Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 147–48; William L. Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, WBC 47a (Dallas, TX: Word, 1991), 46; tentatively, Craig R. Koester, “The Epistle to the Hebrews in Recent Study,” *Currents in Research* 2 (1994): 213–14.

When all the commandments of the Law had been spoken to the people by Moses...he sprinkled the people, saying: “This is the blood of covenant that God has commanded to you.” (Heb 9.20 quoting Exod 24.8)

The sight [of God’s appearance at the giving of the Law] was so frightening that Moses said, “I am terrified and trembling.” (Heb 12.21 quoting Deut 9.19)

In both instances, the author anchors Moses’ speech to its original setting in the Pentateuch, whereas, as we shall see, most of the texts spoken by the divine agents have no obvious temporal referent.⁵⁰ Moses’ speech happened once; divine discourse persists. Therefore, it seems that the author of Hebrews has set apart these divine participants as exceptional. Only these three continue to speak. Implicit in this portrayal by the author is the assertion that some unifying characteristic exists among them; some quality that they share makes them viable speakers. The traditional link is they are depicted in early Christian literature as God.

The author of Hebrews uses divine speech to characterize these speakers, and in many cases, the addressees of the speech also. First, while the author includes a few quotations from the Jewish Scriptures when God spoke to Abraham or another human, the Father’s present speech in Hebrews typically is directed to the Son (1.5, 8–9, 10–12, 13; 5.5, 6; 7.17, 21).⁵¹ This intra-divine discourse between the Father and the Son, found in Chapter 2 of the present study, displays what is unique about Jesus. With these texts, the author reveals that this is the Son of God (1.5; 5.5) who is anointed (1.8–9) and worshipped by angels (1.6) and who had a role in the

⁵⁰ Some divine discourse in Hebrews is located at a certain time (e.g., 1.6; 10.5–7; cf. 4.7). In those instances, the author introduces a context for the speech to make a specific point.

⁵¹ One notable exception is 13.5: “He [God] has said, ‘Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.’” This chapter revisits many main themes from the previous chapters. In his essay on the OT in Hebrews 13.1–8 (“Constructing ‘Janus-Faced’ Exhortations: The Use of Old Testament Narratives in Heb 13.1–8,” *Bib* 89.3 [2008]: 401–9), David M. Allen has shown that the quotation in 13.5 recalls Joshua’s entrance into the promised rest and the typological connection between Joshua (Ἰησοῦς) and Jesus (Ἰησοῦς). In addition to this implicit reference to Jesus, I think is also an implicit reference to the Holy Spirit. As we shall see, he is the divine agent most connected with this narrative in Hebrews. Thus, in Hebrews 13.5, “God” (found in 13.4) could refer to the three more broadly.

creation of the earth (1.10–12; cf. 1.2). This Son now sits at the right hand of the Father (1.13). He is a priest according to the order of Melchizedek (5.6; 7.17; 7.21). With the prosopological reading strategy, the author implicitly challenges previous interpretive traditions that addressed these texts to any earlier Davidic monarch; these are texts about the Son. Additionally, since this author is constantly comparing elements of the “old” and “new” covenants, these references often have an additional “non-addressee”: in chapter 1, the angels; in chapters 5 and 7, Aaron and his lineage. This speech in Hebrews reveals the inimitability of the Son demonstrated through the superlative words of his Father. Prior to Hebrews 10.19, the Father speaks once more in Hebrews 8.8–12. Here he has no explicit conversation partner, and his speech is not about the Son per se. Instead, quoting Greek Jeremiah 38.31–34, the Father declares that he will make a new covenant. On the heels of the author’s discussion of the new covenant’s “better mediator,” it seems likely that the Son is not far from view. Thus, chapter two of this study envisions the Father speaking to (and perhaps sometimes about) his Son.

Second, as we shall see in Chapter 3, the Son’s speech is exclusively directed to the Father (2.12–13; 10.5–7). The unifying characteristic of these texts is the willing submission of the Son to death. He presents himself, faithful (2.12–13) and obedient (10.5–7). Jesus’ speech in chapter 2 also reveals his care for his “brothers and sisters” (2.12). While the Father’s speech shows how Jesus is unlike any other person, Jesus’ speech in 2.12–13 reminds the readers of his remarkable connection with humanity. The author brackets his speech with further comments on their unity. He helps Abraham’s descendants (2.16) and shared in their humanity (2.14). He was made like these siblings in every way (*κατὰ πάντα*, 2.17), so that he might be able to help when they are tested (2.18). In Hebrews 10.5–7, at his entrance into the world,

Christ declares his desire to do the will of the Father, speaking Greek Psalm 39.7–9. In both of the Son’s speeches, his solidarity with and mission to humanity is firmly in view. Likewise, as well as shall see, the author locates these speeches at key moments (or stages) in the Son’s life.

Third, the Holy Spirit’s speech, to which we will turn our attention in Chapter 4, is exclusively directed to the community (to “you” [pl.], 3.7–4.11; to “us,” 10.15–18). This clear distinction between the Father’s and the Spirit’s speech offers proof that the author has not merged these two agents, but views them as individual participants. In addition to the difference in addressees, the Spirit’s speech has a different purpose and tone. He exhorts the community with a warning in Hebrews 3–4 and with a promise in Hebrews 10. The Father and the Son speak to one another, but the Spirit speaks to us. This speech by the Spirit occurs third in the pattern of divine discourse that I mentioned above. So while readers can “hear” the conversation between Father and Son, it is only after they observe their speech that the Spirit speaks directly to them, perhaps in order to make clear its implications.

An important aspect of the interaction between the divine participants is found implicitly in their relational designations.⁵² The presence of a son, for example, necessitates a father. Likewise referring to a character as a father implies that he has a child. In other words, “the purpose of the father/son language is to indicate that God and Jesus are identified by their relation to each other, and have no existence apart from that relation.”⁵³ Elsewhere God is shown to be in interaction

⁵² This relational quality supports the use of “person” language with regard to Hebrews. While personifications and emanations are not excluded from relationships *per se*, Hebrews offers no caution about the logical extension of his portrayal. I address the claim that the author is operating in terms of a Logos- or Wisdom-christology that assumes an impersonal being in §2.1.3 and §2.1.4 in my discussion of Hebrews 1.5 and 1.10–12.

⁵³ Francis Watson, “The Triune Divine Identity: Reflections on Pauline God-Language, in Disagreement with J. D. G. Dunn,” *JSNT* 80 (2000): 114–15. Watson’s comment, while in the context of Pauline theology, refers to the logic of relational language in general.

with Jesus; it is through Jesus that God restores his relationship with humanity. Hebrews presents Jesus as an absolute necessity of God's plan at various points in the discourse. In fact, without any notable exceptions, God is primarily defined in terms of his work on behalf of humanity. Applying what Bultmann concluded of Paul, Hebrews explicitly "is about God not in his own essence, but only as he is significant for humanity, its responsibility and its salvation."⁵⁴ If Hebrews characterizes the Father in terms of his work on behalf of humanity, and if Hebrews characterizes the zenith of that work to be the Christ-event (broadly conceived), then as a result, Hebrews primarily defines the Father in terms of the Christ-event. Hebrews presents the Father and Son in a relationship of interdependence. Without the Father, the Son would not be appointed. Without the Son, the Father would remain apart from his people.

In contrast to the Pauline Epistles and Synoptic Gospels, the Holy Spirit, on the other hand, is not portrayed as the "Spirit of God" or the "Spirit of Christ" or any related designations in Hebrews, which might obscure the connection among them. Instead, the author of Hebrews again asserts the connection between the Spirit and the Father or Son with language about interactions. The Father "distributes" the Spirit as a testimony to this great salvation (2.4),⁵⁵ and it is through the eternal Spirit that Jesus offers himself unblemished to God (9.14).⁵⁶ The Spirit empowers and extends the work of Christ in Hebrews. This divine interaction among the three

⁵⁴ "Sie handelt von Gott nicht in seinem Wesen an sich, sondern nur so, wie er für den Menschen, seine Verantwortung und sein Heil, bedeutsam ist." He goes on to memorably say, "Deshalb und in diesem Sinne ist die paulinische Theologie zugleich Anthropologie." See Rudolf Bultmann, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, 5th ed., Neue theologische Grundrisse (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1965), 191–92.

⁵⁵ For this interpretation of Hebrews 2.4, see David M. Allen, "The Holy Spirit as Gift or Giver? Retaining the Pentecostal Dimension of Hebrews 2.4," *BT* 59.3 (2008): 151–58; as well as David M. Allen, "'The Forgotten Spirit': A Pentecostal Reading of the Letter to the Hebrews?," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 18.1 (2009): 51–66.

⁵⁶ The equation of the "eternal spirit" (πνεῦμα αἰώνιον) with the "Holy Spirit" is discussed briefly in Chapter 4, n. 47.

necessitates a move away from models that privilege christology to the detriment of the New Testament's other theological categories.

Hebrews presents Father, Son, and Spirit speaking in distinct ways. They interact with each other and with humanity, both verbally and non-verbally. The author never answers our range of questions about the ontological connections between Spirit and Son, for example, but he weaves a picture of interconnectedness among these characters identified with God. In the work that follows these relationships will be highlighted in terms of the communication between each character and his respective dialogue partner. As we shall see, Hebrews offers a level of complexity regarding these intra-divine dynamics that are at times unparalleled in the rest of the New Testament.⁵⁷

1.1.3. Divine Discourse *ad Intra* and Divine Discourse *ad Extra*

Finding language that represents the verbal interactions between Father and Son and between the Spirit and the community in a way that is both lucid and accurate is challenging. The titles of my major chapters ("Intra-divine Discourse" and "Extra-divine Discourse") appropriate the classic theological language of *Deus ad intra* ("God's life in himself") and *Deus ad extra* ("God's life toward the outside").⁵⁸

Since the Father and Son speak to one another and are both identified by the author as θεός, their conversation is "intra-divine."⁵⁹ Conversely, the Spirit's speech

⁵⁷ For a more explicit discussion of the Trinity in the New Testament, as well as further discussion of divine relationship and interaction, see Wesley Hill, *Paul and the Trinity: Persons, Relations, and the Pauline Letters* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015).

⁵⁸ My titles are also an allusion to Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Divine Discourse: Philosophical Reflections on the Claim That God Speaks* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

⁵⁹ Others refer to this as an "inner-Trinitarian conversation." See Knut Backhaus, "Gott als Psalmist: Ps 2 im Hebräerbrief," in *Der sprechende Gott: Gesammelte Studien zum Hebräerbrief*, WUNT 240 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 114; Markus Barth, "Old Testament in Hebrews: An Essay in Biblical Hermeneutics," in *Current Issues in New Testament Interpretation* (New York: Harper, 1962), 62; Hans Hübner, *Biblische Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, vol. 3: Hebräerbrief, Evangelien und Offenbarung Epilegomena, 3 vols. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990), 24,

originates with the Spirit, who is reasonably associated with God in Hebrews, but it extends beyond God to humanity. The relationship between God's life *ad intra* and *ad extra* is often articulated via "Rahner's Rule": "The 'economic' Trinity [*ad extra*] is the 'immanent' Trinity [*ad intra*], and the 'immanent' Trinity is the 'economic' Trinity."⁶⁰ This rule insists that implicit in God's actions *ad extra* is his life *ad intra*.

To use this terminology is not to insist that Rahner's axiom is operative or applicable within Hebrews. Even for Rahner this would not be considered possible because he did not think that Scripture "explicitly present[s] a doctrine of the 'immanent Trinity,'"⁶¹ although to what extent Rahner would agree that the Father-Son conversation is "intra-divine" is another question that we cannot answer here. Rahner relates verbal (or verbally-portrayed) communication as something that is in part external and thus part of God's life *ad extra*. This fits with Hebrews since the author invites his readers to listen to the communication between the Father and Son. Nevertheless, "speaking 'immanently,'" he says that "the Son is the self-expression of the Father, the word of the Father (not of the Godhead)."⁶²

This also may fit with Hebrews presentation of God. In the opening line, the Father does not speak to the Son, but through the Son *to us*. When the presentation of divine discourse throughout Hebrews is examined more thoroughly, we see that the Son does not speak to us verbally; we witness his words and works through the Spirit. The complexity of language about God in a sense illustrates Rahner's axiom

28; cf. Michael Theobald, "Vom Text zum 'lebendigen Wort' (Hebr 4,12): Beobachtungen zur Schrifthermeneutik des Hebräerbriefs," in *Jesus Christus als die Mitte der Schrift: Studien zur Hermeneutik des Evangeliums*, ed. Christof Landmesser, Hans-Joachim Eckstein, and Hermann Lichtenberger, BNZW 86 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1997), 774.

⁶⁰ Karl Rahner, *Trinity* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2001), 22. For more on "Rahner's Rule," see Fred R. Sanders, "Entangled in the Trinity: Economic and Immanent Trinity in Recent Theology," *Dialog* 40.3 (2001): 175–82; Fred R. Sanders, *The Image of the Immanent Trinity: Rahner's Rule and the Theological Interpretation of Scripture*, Issues in Systematic Theology 12 (Peter Lang, 2005).

⁶¹ Rahner, *Trinity*, 22.

⁶² Rahner, *Trinity*, 63.

that God apart from humanity and in relationship with humanity are not easily untangled. As we progress through Hebrews and explore the author's presentation of the Father, Son, and Spirit, Rahner's axiom need not be read into Hebrews prescriptively, but may offer a useful starting point for thinking about the difficulty in placing Hebrews' depictions firmly in one category or the other.

1.2. Three Supporting Voices

Thus far our discussion of secondary literature has typically been dedicated to literature beyond the study of Hebrews. Those advances in the disciplines of biblical and early Christian studies are essential to this inquiry, but now we turn to those studies on Hebrews that offer the backdrop to my own. This list is relatively short because, despite the substantive increase in literature on Hebrews in recent decades, many of which examine a facet of Hebrews' use of Jewish Scripture⁶³ and some of which discuss the author's emphasis on the "word of God,"⁶⁴ no single study explores the intersection of these two themes—the presentation of the words from Scripture as God's speech.⁶⁵ This review of pertinent literature is thus by no means exhaustive, but instead acknowledges three studies that raised questions parallel to (though not intersecting with) the one that follows.

⁶³ For example, David M. Allen, *Deuteronomy and Exhortation in Hebrews: A Study in Narrative Re-Presentation*, WUNT II 238 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008); Susan E. Docherty, *The Use of the Old Testament in Hebrews: A Case Study in Early Jewish Bible Interpretation*, WUNT II 260 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009); Radu Gheorghita, *The Role of the Septuagint in Hebrews: An Investigation of Its Influence with Special Consideration to the Use of Hab 2:3–4 in Heb 10:37–38*, WUNT II 160 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003); Richard Ounsworth, *Joshua Typology in the New Testament*, WUNT II 328 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012).

⁶⁴ Jonathan I. Griffiths, *Hebrews and Divine Speech*, LNTS 507 (London: T&T Clark, 2014); Tomasz Lewicki, "Weist nicht ab den Sprechenden!": *Wort Gottes und Paraklese im Hebräerbrief*, Paderborner theologische Studien 41 (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2004); David Wider, *Theozentrik und Bekenntnis Untersuchungen zur Theologie des Redens Gottes im Hebräerbrief*, BZNW 87 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1997).

⁶⁵ A couple of recent studies do briefly highlight the importance of God's speech in Hebrews: Nicholas J. Moore, *Repetition in Hebrews: Plurality and Singularity in the Letter to the Hebrews, Its Ancient Context, and the Early Church*, WUNT II 388 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015), 102–4; Peeler, *You Are My Son*, 29–37.

1.2.1. G. B. Caird

Along with Käsemann's second edition of *Das wandernde Gottesvolk* (1957)⁶⁶ and Ceslas Spicq's commentary, *L'Épître aux Hébreux* (1950),⁶⁷ one of the decisive moments in the history of interpretation for the Epistle to the Hebrews is G. B. Caird's succinct, yet indispensable, article, "Exegetical Method of the Epistle to the Hebrews" (1959).⁶⁸ Despite what he calls "formidable discouragement" about his topic, Caird writes about the contribution of citations of Jewish scripture for the overall argument of Hebrews. The recent surplus of studies on the author's relationship with Scripture are indebted to Caird, even though he is often not acknowledged.⁶⁹ Tucked within this essay is not only Caird's contention that the author is intentioned in his reading strategy but also Caird's summary of the author's readings. He cautions against the claims of some (most?) who presume that the author of Hebrews desires "to prove the superiority of the New Covenant to the Old";⁷⁰ instead, he presents Scriptures' "confessed inadequacy" in order to "summon them to that constant striving towards maturity of faith."⁷¹

This study will not address Caird's proposed purpose for the authorship of Hebrews, nor anyone else's for that matter, but it will, in a sense, develop his claim that Hebrews presents the "confessed inadequacy of the old order."⁷² The author does not accomplish this through quoting text as text, but rather through presenting

⁶⁶ Ernst Käsemann, *Das wandernde Gottesvolk: Eine Untersuchung zum Hebräerbrieff*, 2nd ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1957).

⁶⁷ Ceslas Spicq, *L'Épître aux Hébreux*, 2 vols., 3rd ed., Études bibliques (Paris: Gabalda, 1952).

⁶⁸ "Exegetical Method of the Epistle to the Hebrews," *Canadian Journal of Theology* 5.1 (1959): 44–51.

⁶⁹ For a discussion of Caird's impact upon and conspicuous absence from recent studies, see Mackie, *Eschatology and Exhortation in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 80–81.

⁷⁰ For example, Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 80; Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, xcix–ci; Susanne Lehne, *The New Covenant in Hebrews*, JSNTSup 44 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990).

⁷¹ Caird, "Exegetical Method," 47.

⁷² Caird, "Exegetical Method," 47.

text as the words of God himself. Hebrews does not offer the old covenant's self-assessment, but its initiator's. This claim—that God has critiqued the old order—competes with recent assessments that (over-)emphasize the author's creativity. As we shall see, the author is indeed innovative, but he stands within an established tradition of readers who employ similar strategies as they approach scriptural texts.

1.2.2. Michael Theobald

In his 1997 essay, “Vom Text zum ‘lebendigen Wort’ (Hebr 4,12),”⁷³ Michael Theobald highlights the distinctive way in which Scripture is presented in Hebrews as the words of God. While most of this chapter summarizes the details of the occurrences of speech, many of which appear also in the pages that follow, Theobald raises two questions of interest for our study: (1) To what extent can the author's “spoken” quotations be categorized as “citations” (Zitate)?⁷⁴ (2) What is the hermeneutical framework revealed by the author's presentation of Scripture as speech?

Let us begin first with the question of whether the author's quotations introduced by verbs of speech can accurately be labelled citations. Theobald rightly identifies the fact that Hebrews does not speak of “texts” or the “text of Scripture.”⁷⁵ The words found within the Bible (in modern terms) are presented as God's speech—as a dialogue in an ongoing story about God speaking to his people, as well as the Father, Son, and Spirit speaking to one another. The author of Hebrews has

⁷³ Michael Theobald, “Vom Text zum ‘lebendigen Wort’ (Hebr 4,12): Beobachtungen zur Schrifthermeneutik des Hebräerbriefs,” in *Jesus Christus als die Mitte der Schrift: Studien zur Hermeneutik des Evangeliums*, ed. Christof Landmesser, Hans-Joachim Eckstein, and Hermann Lichtenberger, BNZW 86 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1997), 751–90.

⁷⁴ “Vom Text zum ‘lebendigen Wort,’” 755–76.

⁷⁵ “...nicht als gegliedertes Textcorpus tritt ihm die Schrift entgegen, sondern als Zeuge oder im Bild gesagt: als ‘Behaltis’ für Gottes lebendige Wort bzw. in der Terminologie seines ‘theologischen Fundamentalsatzes’ 1.1f: für Gottes ‘vielfaches und vielgestaltiges Sprechen in den Propheten’” (Theobald, “Vom Text zum ‘lebendigen Wort,’” 758–59).

undoubtedly encountered these words in texts, but he distances his readers from his experience of reading. They are to “hear” God’s voice and respond (3.7–4.11).

Nevertheless, Theobald’s rejection of the term “citation” appears to be on the basis of a definition that is too restrictive. Indeed, if a citation is only a marked reference to a written text as a written text, then he rightly abandons this term, but a citation need not be defined in such a limited way. A citation is a reference to a work or body of work. Thus, while this study may prefer the language of a “quotation,” citation can be appropriately used when speaking of the quotations of Scripture presented as divine discourse in Hebrews.

Moving to our second question, Theobald’s primary concern, the hermeneutical framework of Hebrews, cannot be assessed so easily. Having concluded that the quotations in Hebrews are “separated” (*herauslösen*) “from their literary context” to say something “real” about God,⁷⁶ Theobald recognizes the implicit effect of this reading strategy on the original Jewish text itself: the “first reality” (*erste Wirklichkeit*) received by its earliest (Jewish) readers is a shadow or glimpse of the true reality—“the divine dialogue in the heavens” (*im himmlischen Dialog Gottes*).⁷⁷ Thus, in a sense, Theobald’s understanding of the text mirrors the author of Hebrews’ understanding of the first covenant practices (see esp. Hebrews 9). Through the “first” reading or understanding of the text, the “second” is “revealed” (cf. 9.8). As with the covenants, both continuity *and* discontinuity with the first reading—a tradition familiar to the readers—assist in clarifying the true message of the divine discourse. For example, the author presents Christ’s sacrifice

⁷⁶ “Vom Text zum ‘lebendigen Wort,’” 785.

⁷⁷ “Vom Text zum ‘lebendigen Wort,’” 786.

in terms of various offerings from the Pentateuch.⁷⁸ Those points of connection illustrate that Christ's sacrifice atones and cleanses, like its first covenant counterpart; however, the author clarifies points of disconnect as well. This offering occurs once (7.27; 9.12; 9.26–28; 10.10), cleanses the conscience (9.14; 9.22), and is offered by a unique priest who is blameless (7.26–28). Similarly, Hebrews reading of Greek Psalm 109.4 is addressed to an individual who is envisioned as a priest-king. The addressee is within the line of David, and so he is of the right lineage to be a king, but of the wrong lineage to be a priest. In addition to these elements that the author of Hebrews retains (even implicitly), he also alters elements of the first reading. First, he elevates the second “lord” to a divine status (cf. Mark 12.35 and parallels). Second, he interprets “forever” in support of the claim that this is a priest who never dies (Heb 7.23–24).

Rather than composing his own text, the author selects a passage with a rich history of interpretation that he shares with his readers, but goes beyond their communal understanding. He desires to bring the readers, and by extension their readings, out from the shadows in order to be “enlightened” (cf. Heb 6.4).⁷⁹ Therefore, while I may disagree with Theobald's claim that Hebrews is to be read “dualistically,” his study is of great value for my own, particularly in its emphasis on the three divine speakers around whom the author of Hebrews has crafted his epistle. As such, the hermeneutical framework proposed by Theobald underlies my own discussion of the author's reading strategy. In assessing the continuity and discontinuity of the author's readings in comparison with their tradition, the extent

⁷⁸ For example, he primarily connects Christ's offering to the Day of Atonement offering in 9.6–14 (Lev 16), but also includes elements of the red heifer offering in 9.13 (Lev 19). He then portrays Christ's offering in connection with the covenant inauguration (e.g., Exod 24) in 9.19–23.

⁷⁹ Tomasz Lewicki summarizes (and slightly develops) Theobald's framework in his work also: “Der eigentliche Sinn der zitierten Schriftworte enthüllt sich in der Person des Sohnes—er ist der hermeneutische Schlüssel zur Schrift” (*Weist nicht ab den Sprechenden!*, 27).

to which Hebrews presents his audience's understanding as "shadowy" will come to the fore.

1.2.3. Tomasz Lewicki

In 2004, seven years after Theobald's article, the words of God in Hebrews were discussed again—this time in the form of Tomasz Lewicki's published doctoral thesis entitled, *Weist nicht ab den Sprechenden!* The source of his title, Hebrews 12.25, serves with Hebrews 1.1–2 as one of his core texts. Together the two passages bracket Hebrews as a whole with a depiction of the God who speaks (1.1–2) and whose words by no means should be rejected (12.25). Lewicki's primary aim is to explore the *Wort-Gottes-Theologie* in Hebrews, which includes but is not limited to a discussion of the quotations of divine speech. For him, speech, or perhaps the broader category of communication, is a key theme in Hebrews that surfaces throughout the letter at many times and in various ways: (1) God spoke through the prophets.⁸⁰ (2) God speaks in Scripture.⁸¹ (3) God speaks by the Son.⁸² (4) God speaks audibly to the community.⁸³ Throughout his study Lewicki aims to connect the *Wort-Gottes-Theologie* to the intended audience of Hebrews, hoping to determine the situation that resulted in this distinct reliance on God's speech. For the present study, God's speech in Scripture and to the community (per Lewicki's categories) are most salient.

⁸⁰ God "zu den Vätern in den Propheten sprach" (*Weist nicht ab den Sprechenden!*, 141).

⁸¹ "Der 'lebendige Gott' des Hebr ist ein in der Schrift sprechender Gott" (*Weist nicht ab den Sprechenden!*, 141).

⁸² "Der 'Sohn, in dem Gott zu uns am Ende dieser Tage gesprochen hat' (1.2a), ist der 'Kyrios Jesus, durch den Gott sprach und das Heil initiierte und dessen Wort von den Hörenden auf uns hin zuverlässig überliefert wurde'" (*Weist nicht ab den Sprechenden!*, 142).

⁸³ "Gottes Sprechen wird für die Gemeinde 'direkt' vernehmbar durch das Wirken des heiligen Geistes" (*Weist nicht ab den Sprechenden!*, 143). Lewicki goes on to highlight the speech of the Spirit, but here envisions a communicative role for the Spirit's works.

Lewicki summarizes the theology of Scripture in Hebrews with the words of Markus Barth: “What *has* been said is also *being* said” (emphasis original).⁸⁴ In other words, Scripture is “living—always current” (lebendige—*immer aktuelle*).⁸⁵ Lewicki rightly detects a conversation between Father and Son, which “precedes” the saving work on behalf of humanity,⁸⁶ but he appears to isolate God’s speech to Scripture in a way that, despite his summary statements above to the contrary, too readily emphasizes the context of the original.⁸⁷ In contrast to Theobald and his rejection of citation language, for Lewicki these words are “spoken texts” (gesprochene Texte),⁸⁸ and “the God of Hebrews is a God who speaks within the words of *Scripture*.”⁸⁹ In comparison with other studies, Lewicki also devotes a relatively large amount of space to the Holy Spirit’s activity in Hebrews;⁹⁰ unlike this study, however, Lewicki implies that the Spirit’s speech is not of the same kind. The Spirit, he says, “does not speak in his ‘own name,’ but ‘only’ acts as the mouthpiece of God.”⁹¹ As we shall see, this is a flawed assessment. But the chapter where this material lies, “Das Sprechen Gottes und die Antwort der Glaubenden,” discusses all of the ways that the community speaks back, both verbally and nonverbally. Here the speaking God is heard in belief or rejected in unbelief. Nevertheless, Lewicki’s expansion of Theobald’s work and his reiteration of the

⁸⁴ *Weist nicht ab den Sprechenden!*, 24; quoting Barth, “Old Testament in Hebrews,” 60.

⁸⁵ Lewicki, *Weist nicht ab den Sprechenden!*, 23.

⁸⁶ *Weist nicht ab den Sprechenden!*, 26.

⁸⁷ The same could be said of William Lane who writes, “The central theme of Hebrews is the importance of listening to the voice of God in Scripture and in the act of Christian preaching” (*Hebrews 1–8*, cxxvii).

⁸⁸ Lewicki, *Weist nicht ab den Sprechenden!*, 23.

⁸⁹ “Der Gott des Hebräerbriefs ist ein in *Schriftworten* redender Gott” (emphasis original; *Weist nicht ab den Sprechenden!*, 23).

⁹⁰ See §4 for a discussion of the tendency to downplay pneumatology in Hebrews.

⁹¹ “...der Geist hier nicht in seinem ‘eigenem Namen’ spricht, sondern ‘lediglich’ als Sprachrohr Gottes fungiert” (*Weist nicht ab den Sprechenden!*, 85).

theme of the *Wort-Gottes-Theologie* demonstrates the author's emphasis on verbal divine communication in Hebrews.

1.3. Conclusion

Throughout the text of Hebrews, the author never portrays Scripture as written, but instead as heard or spoken. Through what modern scholars call “prosopological exegesis,” the author teaches his readers about the actual “characters” within the text of their Scriptures. He shows how the Christ speaks and was spoken about in the Psalms and how the Spirit speaks to them “today.” This exegetical method, as we have seen, is not limited to the Epistle to the Hebrews and is found in many New Testament texts, as well as other early Christian literature. But in Hebrews, divine discourse runs throughout the argument, allowing the author to make many of his major assertions. It is through divine discourse that Hebrews teaches us about the superiority of the new covenant and its new mediator, the Son. Implicit in the author's use of this reading strategy are certain assumptions about the Father, Son, and Spirit—who they are and how they interact. In the first two of the author's three main sections, each character speaks in the same order in a consistent way, suggesting that the author has deliberately constructed the majority of his argument around these three participants. In each of the next three chapters, we will examine one of the divine speakers, the Father, Son, and Spirit, respectively, asking what their divine discourse contributes to the theology of Hebrews.

2. Intra-divine Discourse (1): The Father Addresses the Son

The first speaker in the Epistle to the Hebrews is the Father. But he is in a sense the default speaker throughout Scripture. This is illustrated by the fact that the passages interpreted by means of prosopological exegesis in which the Father speaks do not exhibit any changes in speaker. The Father always spoke the things that he speaks in Hebrews. Rather than altering the speaker of these texts, the author of Hebrews changes the addressee or the subject. The Father speaks to and about the Son in almost every instance. This chapter will explore the speech of the Father in the first two major sections of Hebrews. First, he speaks seven times to or about the Son and/or angels in Hebrews 1. Then, he speaks Greek Psalm 2.7 and Psalm 109.4 to the Son again in Hebrews 5 and repeats the quotation of Psalm 109.4 in Hebrews 7. Finally, he declares that he will establish a new covenant in Hebrews 8. With these speeches the Father confirms the Son's identity and calling and announces his plans for the rest of his children.

2.1. Hebrews 1.1–14: God Speaks to the Son

Dialogue typically involves a speaker and an addressee. When the latter is specified, and thus limited, some are left outside the conversation. In the seven instances of prosopological exegesis in Hebrews 1.5–13 three types of characters are typically identified. The first character is the speaker, God the Father, which flows from Hebrews 1.1–4, where the author begins:

At many times and in various ways, God, who formerly spoke to our ancestors through the prophets, in these last days speaks to us through the Son... (1.1–2)

Immediately in Hebrews, God speaks. While in Hebrews 1.2 he speaks *through* the Son, in 1.5–13 he speaks *to* the Son (1.5, 8–9, 10–12, 13), as well as to an unidentified group (1.6, 7). These addressees are the second characters in these texts. The third and final characters are the angels. They are the “non-addressees” of the texts addressed to the Son, “for to whom among the angels did [God] ever say” these things? The author anticipates our answer: absolutely no one.¹ Although in most conversations those not addressed are of no consequence to the discourse, in Hebrews 1 these “non-addressees” are of the utmost importance. The author highlights those to whom God did not speak, thereby making clear that the words he speaks to his Son are truly distinct. Through the identification of these three entities in relationship to these texts, the author uses his citations to begin his definition of the Son, telling his audience to heed what they say because God himself has spoken them.

2.1.1. Hebrews 1.1–4 and the Introduction to the Son

While Hebrews is often praised for its elaborate prose and advanced argumentation, few portions are exemplified beyond Hebrews 1.1–4 where the “rhetorical artistry...surpasses that of any other portion of the New Testament.”² The author utilizes alliteration among other literary devices to introduce one of his main characters: the Son. Although the primary identification of the Son occurs in Hebrews 1.5–14, before allowing the Father to explain who the Son is through his

¹ Ellingworth summarizes these verses: “God never made to any angel any declaration comparable to Ps. 2:7 and 2 Sa. 7:14” (*Epistle to the Hebrews*, 110).

² Harold W. Attridge, *Hebrews*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1989), 36.

own words, the author offers several summary statements of his own. To name a few, this Son is the means by which God speaks to “us” (1.2), is the radiance of God’s glory (1.3a), and is seated at the right hand of God in heaven (1.3d). In his last statement, the author reveals the most striking characteristic about this Son. He has become as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs (1.4).

A preliminary interpretive matter is the relationship between Hebrews 1.1–4 and Hebrews 1.5–14. In the prior, the author presents the Son who is the ideal revelation to God’s people. This text foreshadows several themes in Hebrews, such as the high priestly christology (1.3), the comparison between God’s revelation in the past and present (1.1–2), and the Son’s superiority to the angels (1.4). Directly after the last verse, the author continues to elaborate the Son’s superiority to the angels through a series of seven citations from Scripture. While some have tried to maximize the structural relationship between 1.1–4 and 1.5–14,³ a thematic relationship is to be preferred. Hebrews 1.1–4 likely offers an introduction to the identity and actions of the Son that will be proved and expanded by the catena, as well as the rest of Hebrews.⁴ This section closes with the primary assertion of the series of quotations: Jesus is superior to the angels. In order to make this claim, the author of Hebrews forms his discourse as epideictic *synkrisis* (or “comparison”).⁵

³ Most notably, John P. Meier, “Structure and Theology in Heb 1,1–14,” *Bib* 66.2 (1985): 168–189; “Symmetry and Theology in the Old Testament Citations of Heb 1,5–14,” *Bib* 66.4 (1985): 504–33; Victor Rhee, “The Role of Chiasm for Understanding Christology in Hebrews 1:1–14,” *JBL* 131.2 (2012): 341–62.

⁴ William Lane suggests a synthetic parallel between these texts (*Hebrews 1–8*, WBC 47a [Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1991], 22) noting, for example: “The angels in v. 4 are the counterpart to the prophets in v. 1” (p. 17). Another interesting parallel to Hebrews 1.1–14 is *Wisdom of Solomon* where the author first describes Wisdom (7.22–8.1), then after recalling his quest for her (8.2–9.18), he moves to a discussion of her work on Israel’s behalf (10.1–19.22).

⁵ Michael W. Martin and Jason A. Whitlark, “The Encomiastic Topics of Synkrisis as the Key to the Structure and Argument of Hebrews,” *NTS* 57.3 (2011): 415–39.

Several examples of *synkrisis* can be found in Hellenistic funeral orations, such as Isocrates' praise of Evagoras.⁶ Throughout this text Isocrates asks (paraphrasing): "Who can compare to Evagoras on this matter?" (e.g., §66), making a general comparison with any possible example, but his most thorough comparison is between Evagoras and Cyrus (see esp. §37–39, 58–59). He also provides some rationale for his choice:

of those who lived later, perhaps indeed of all, the one hero who was most admired by the greatest number was Cyrus, who deprived the Medes of their kingdom and gained it for the Persians. But while Cyrus with a Persian army conquered the Medes, a deed that many a Greek or a barbarian could easily do, Evagoras manifestly accomplished the greater part of the deeds that have been mentioned through strength of his own mind and body... (*Or.* 9.37)⁷

By selecting this example, Isocrates produces a comparison that elevates his subject above his audience's exemplar. Similarly, the author of Hebrews selects the angels, it seems, in order to elevate the Son above his audience's model among the heavenly beings (that are not God).

In ancient handbooks, rhetoricians suggested that *encomia* (praise) of any sort should contain several specifically outlined characteristics about the persons or entities that they were praising (or deposing). Among the most basic lists, such as the one found in Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria*, these consisted of describing "times before they were born, their own lifetimes, and...the time after their death" (3.7). Each of these categories also seems to be present within the catena of Hebrews 1 in the author's comparison of Jesus and the angels. In fact, as Martin and Whitlark argue, that rhetorical device is not only found in this chapter, but also is the key to

⁶ For a more thorough discussion comparing funeral orations and Hebrews, see Thomas H. Olbricht, "Hebrews as Amplification," in *Rhetoric and the New Testament*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Thomas H. Olbricht, JSNTSup (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 375–87.

⁷ Translation via *Isocrates*, vol. 3, LCL 373 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 23.

the structure of Hebrews as a whole. It is through five comparisons that the author of Hebrews compares the “old” and “new” covenants. Using five of the classically prescribed categories, they provide the following outline for Hebrews:

- (1) Origins: Synkrisis of Covenant Heavenly Mediators (1.1–14; 2.5–18)
- (2) Birth: Synkrisis of Covenant Earthly Inaugurators (3.1–6)
- (3) Pursuits–Education: Synkrisis of the Priestly Apprenticeships of Each Covenant (5.1–10)
- (4) Pursuits–Deeds: Synkrisis of the Priestly Deeds of Each Covenant (7.1–10.18)
- (5) Death/Events after Death: Synkrisis of Covenant *Eschata* (12.18–24)⁸

When paired with Hebrews’ instances of deliberative *synkrisis* (comparison with the purpose of persuasion found primarily in the so-called “warning passages”), they claim that this structure accounts for most of the rhetorical turns in Hebrews.⁹ That is, the author moves through the “life” of the covenants to demonstrate that the “new” is and always has been superior to the “old,” thereby using this comparison to exhort his audience to remain faithful. This superior covenant comes with greater benefits for those who follow it and greater punishments for those who abandon it.

Rather than being the key to the structure of Hebrews, it seems more helpful to think of this framework as the foundation for much of the content of Hebrews—the “rhetorical and compositional categories and strategies...that would have guided the compositional practices of the author and informed the expectations of his audience.”¹⁰ In their study, Martin and Whitlark go one step further and argue that the shifts from one comparison to the next are also the boundaries for the author’s units of discourse, but their proposal does not appear to directly contradict the major

⁸ Apart from the spelling of “synkrisis,” this chart is replicated *verbatim* from Martin and Whitlark (“Encomiastic Topics of Syncrisis,” 425). The verse references appear within another parallel chart in the article (“Encomiastic Topics of Syncrisis,” 423).

⁹ See also the follow-up piece: Michael W. Martin and Jason A. Whitlark, “Choosing What Is Advantageous: The Relationship between Epideictic and Deliberative Syncrisis in Hebrews,” *NTS* 58.3 (2012): 379–400.

¹⁰ Martin and Whitlark, “Encomiastic Topics of Syncrisis,” 416.

structural proposals outlined in the final chapter of this study (see §5.1). We will return to this later, but for now, let us assume that Martin and Whitlark have illuminated the key role of *synkrisis* in Hebrews, but have not sufficiently demonstrated its necessity—or superiority—with regard to the structure of Hebrews. The structure of this chapter, however, will proceed through Quintilian’s three stages, or categories, of *synkrisis* in order to examine Hebrews 1.5–14 and its comparison of the heavenly mediators of the two covenants.¹¹ In the catena, the author moves from (1) the time before the birth of the Son and the birth itself (1.5–6) to (2) the office and attributes of the Son (1.7–12) to (3) the “posthumous” submission to the Son (1.13–14).¹²

2.1.2. Hebrews 1.5–14 and an Introduction to the Catena

In Hebrews 1.5–14, the predominant structure appears to be pairs of statements that contain both an address to the Son and a statement about the angels (sometimes in the reverse order):¹³

- | | |
|--------|--|
| 1.5 | To the Son: Psalm 2.7 and 2 Samuel 7.14 (Address: “Son”) |
| 1.6 | To/about the angels: Deuteronomy 32.43 |
| 1.7 | About the angels: Greek Psalm 103.4 |
| 1.8–12 | To the Son: Greek Psalm 44.7–8 (Address: “God”) and
Greek Psalm 101.26–28 (Address: “Lord”) |
| 1.13 | To the Son: Greek Psalm 109.1 ([Implied] Address: “Lord”) |
| 1.14 | About the angels: the author’s rhetorical question about their
position |

¹¹ This is one further point of divergence with Martin and Whitlark, who use four categories; I am, however, largely indebted to the insights of their study.

¹² Hebrews 1.14 serves as a summary statement and forms an *inclusio* about the function of the heavenly mediators with 1.1–2a. The angels are ministering spirits; the Son is God’s final revelation. See Rhee, “The Role of Chiasm,” 342.

¹³ The decisions about text-form in this chart will be discussed below. This structure is adapted from J. Swetnam, “Hebrews 1,5–14: A New Look,” *Melita Theologica* 51.1 (2000): 51–68.

With these citations, the author allows the Father to establish the superiority of the Son to the angels. In this chapter, I will discuss the Father's presentation of the exalted Son by dealing with each Scripture citation and expanding upon each speech's contribution to his character.

2.1.3. Hebrews 1.5–6: The Begetting and Birth of the Son

Hebrews 1.5

While in Hebrews 1.1–4 the author presents the Son with several superlative characteristics, this text also leaves several items unaddressed. This figure initially has no genealogy or explicit identification; he remains mysterious, but by presenting him as a “son,” a parent is expected. Verse 5 is the point at which a parent identifies himself:

For to whom among the angels did [God] ever say,
 “You are my son;
 today I have begotten you”?
And again,
 “I will be his father,
 and he will be my son”?¹⁴

With these two citations, the author makes clear what he has hinted at in the previous section: this is the Son of God. If the author has formed this *synkrisis* in accordance with the rhetorical handbooks, then the first topic to cover is the subject's birth or origins. For this, the author reveals his remarkable lineage, but what is the “today” of the cited text?¹⁵

¹⁴ The speaker is not explicitly identified in this verse, but God (ὁ θεός) is the most proximate agent (1.1).

¹⁵ This argument in its entirety can be found elsewhere: Madison N. Pierce, “Hebrews 1 and the Son Begotten ‘Today,’” in *Retrieving Eternal Generation*, ed. Fred R. Sanders and Scott W. Swain (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, Forthcoming).

Many have suggested that this quotation occurs at the exaltation of the Son. As a coronation psalm, it is fitting that God might speak this proclamation when the Son takes his seat at God's right hand. The consensus is that "today" is the day of the exaltation, but whether a change in status occurs "today" also is a matter on which interpreters are divided. Some think the "begetting" and the "speech" both take place at the exaltation.¹⁶ Others claim that this speech is located at the exaltation, but do not locate the begetting explicitly.¹⁷ Curiously, these latter scholars explicitly state that their view is incompatible with the doctrine of "eternal generation," but do not think that the Son is begotten or appointed Son at the exaltation.¹⁸

Locating this *speech* at the coronation of the Son does not necessitate that the "begetting" or appointment takes place at that time also. If the author is using *σήμερον* consistently throughout the Epistle, then this suggests that a finite time is not in view at all. In Hebrews 3–4, "today" is a relative designation, lasting from the time of David's declaration (4.7) until the point when "today" can no longer be referred to as "today" (3.13). Similarly, in Hebrews 13.8, "Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today [*σήμερον*], and forever." Each of these spans of time is left open, and here as elsewhere "today" is an unspecified present reality. If this is the case in Hebrews 1.5 also, then this does not exclude the view that the Father *spoke* this at

¹⁶ James D. G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation*, 2nd edition. (London: SCM Press, 1989), 35–36; L. D. Hurst, "The Christology of Hebrews 1 and 2," in *The Glory of Christ in the New Testament: Studies in Christology*, ed. L. D. Hurst and N. T. Wright (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987), 151–64; Rhee, "The Role of Chiasm," 360–61; Kenneth L. Schenck, "Keeping His Appointment: Creation and Enthronement in Hebrews," *JSNT* 19.66 (1997): esp. 104.

¹⁷ F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 54; Joshua W. Jipp, "The Son's Entrance into the Heavenly World: The Soteriological Necessity of the Scriptural Catena in Hebrews 1.5–14," *NTS* 56.4 (2010): 559; Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 25–26. Koester cites this as the consensus view but does not explicitly give support (*Hebrews*, AB 36 [New York, NY: Doubleday, 2001], 191).

¹⁸ Cockerill, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 103–4; Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 113–14; Meier, "Symmetry and Theology," 505.

the exaltation, but it does make it unlikely that Jesus actually *became* Son at his exaltation because the day that he is, or even became, Son is always “today.”

This metaphorical understanding of the word today also has ancient attestation. In Augustine’s Psalms commentary, for example, he writes of this passage:

[T]he word *today* denotes the actual present, and as in eternity nothing is past as if it had ceased to be, nor future as if it had not yet come to pass, but all is simply present, since whatever is eternal is ever in being, the words, “Today I have begotten you,” are to be understood of the divine generation. In this phrase, the orthodox catholic [i.e., universal] belief proclaims the eternal generation of the Power and Wisdom of God who is the only-begotten Son. (*Enarrat. Ps. 2.6*)¹⁹

Similarly, in the *Confessions* when he comments on Psalm 102.27, also spoken about Jesus in Hebrews 1.12, Augustine says to God:

Your years are but a day, and your day is not recurrent, but always today. Your “today” yields not to tomorrow and does not follow yesterday. Your “today” is eternity. Therefore, you did generate the Co-eternal to whom you said, “Today I have begotten you.” (*Conf. 13.16*)²⁰

For Augustine, God’s day lasts forever.

This is likewise the case for Philo. Commenting on Deuteronomy 4.4, he writes:

[Moses] adds, “You are alive to this day [ἐν τῇ σήμερον]”; and today is interminable eternity, from which there is no departure...the unerring proper name of eternity [αἰῶνος] is “today”... (*Fug. 11.56–57*)²¹

¹⁹ This is a more modern version of the translation offered here: Augustine, *St. Augustine on the Psalms*, ed. Scholastica Hebgin and Felicitas Corrigan, vol. 1: Psalms 1–29, ACW 29 (New York: Paulist Press, 1960), 27.

²⁰ Augustine, *Confessions and Enchiridion*, ed. Albert Cook Outler, Revised, LCC (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006), 254.

²¹ See Philo, *On Flight and Finding. On the Change of Names. On Dreams.*, trans. F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker, LCL 275 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1934), 40–41. This translation is primarily based upon: C. D. Yonge, ed., *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993), 326.

Philo's comment is particularly salient for understanding Hebrews since he and the author both show the influences of similar traditions. Philo attests to the possibility of a more metaphorical and eternal understanding of "today" in the first century, as does Augustine in later centuries. These writers corroborate the author of Hebrews' reading of Psalm 2.7 as an eternal event, as though he says: "You are my Son; *forever* I have begotten you."

While the author uses his quotation of Psalm 2.7 to assert who the Son is, he uses the introductory formula to make a point about who the Son is not. This brings us to a discussion of prosopological exegesis in this text. In this verse, the addressee (the Son) and the "non-addressees" (the angels) are both of great importance. The author makes clear that this speech is exceptional; however, even though part of the author's purpose is to elevate the Son over the angels, by calling him "Son," he actually introduces a correlation, rather than a contrast. This is because the angels sometimes are called "sons of God" in Scripture,²² as in Genesis 6.1–4 (LXX):

Then people began to become numerous on the earth, and daughters were born to them, and the sons of God, seeing that the human daughters were beautiful, took for themselves wives from all whom they chose...when the sons of God had intercourse with the human daughters, they gave birth....

Interpreters typically identify the "sons of God" here with the angels;²³ if the angels are "sons," then how is this Son distinct? While the author does not explicitly acknowledge this potential counterpoint for his readers, a few clues in the text

²² In Greek traditions, this phrase occurs in Genesis 6.2, 4, as well as Psalms 28.1, 88.7—sometimes likely referring to angels or other heavenly beings (Gen 6.2, 4; Ps 88.7) and sometimes to humans (Ps 28.1). In the MT, three additional references in Job also contain this phrase (1.6; 2.1; 38.7), but the Greek tradition translates בְּנֵי as ἄγγελοι in each instance. These alterations in LXX Job may suggest a growing reticence among some to refer to the angels in this way. Psalm 88.7, conversely, reads "holy ones" in the MT, but υἱοὶ θεοῦ in the Greek.

²³ Sven Fockner and others have challenged the identification of these sons with angels ("Reopening the Discussion: Another Contextual Look at the Sons of God," *JSOT* 32.4 [2008]: 435–56); however, this potential misinterpretation does not account for the texts in Job and the Psalms or later "Watcher" traditions. If it is a misreading of the MT, then it is an influential one.

answer the hypothetical objection. First, no *singular* angel is ever called “son,” just as the author suggests with his introductory formula. Further, Jesus is not simply Son; he is the “firstborn” (Heb 1.6). With this more specific designation, the author minimizes any lingering counterarguments about another “son of God.” Even if one claimed that the texts from Scripture that refer to the angels as the “sons of God” suggested a multiplicity of sons, this Son has supremacy.

Even though no single angel was called “son,” a single human is, namely the Davidic king. He bears this title in Psalm 2.7 and 2 Samuel 7.14 (cf. parallels in 1 Chr 17.13; 22.10).²⁴ Further, in Greek Psalm 88.28, the king is called the firstborn (πρωτότοκος), which is likely referred to the next introductory formula in Hebrews 1.6: “but again when he brings the firstborn (πρωτότοκον) into the world, he says...”²⁵ Within the Psalms, these texts can plausibly be applied to someone within the Davidic line, but the author of Hebrews has made certain that his readers know these texts are about the exalted Son. The author has reinterpreted them with prosopological exegesis.²⁶

As I have suggested (see §1.1.1), this technique often takes place when an interpreter finds a tension with a common reading of a text. In this case, the author

²⁴ One additional text to note is 4Q246 that refers to the “Son of God” and the “Son of the Most High.” While the text is traditionally interpreted to be messianic, it is fragmentary and could, with more material, reveal a possible exception. For more, see John J. Collins, *Scepter and the Star* (New York: Doubleday, 1996).

²⁵ This additional messianic king text is likely in view since it not only fits the author’s argument but is also the only context in which πρωτότοκος is used of an individual firstborn of God in the LXX. For more on this reading, see Peeler, *You Are My Son*, 52–55. See also George B. Caird, “Son by Appointment,” in *The New Testament Age: Essays in Honor of Bo Reicke*, ed. William C. Weinrich, vol. 1 (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1984), 75; Ardel B. Caneday, “The Eschatological World Already Subjected to the Son: The Οικουμένη of Hebrews 1.6 and the Son’s Enthronement,” in *A Cloud of Witnesses: The Theology of Hebrews in Its Ancient Contexts*, ed. Richard Bauckham et al., LNTS 387 (London: T&T Clark, 2008), 33.

²⁶ One text that the author cannot reinterpret is 1 Chronicles 28.6: “He said to me, ‘Solomon, your son, will build my house and my courts, for I chose him as my son, and I will be his father.’” This text does not diminish the author’s argument, as he does not say, “To whom among the humans...?” but it does complicate his mission to present this son as wholly unique.

of Hebrews, perhaps in line with a previous tradition,²⁷ proposes that nearly every text that refers to a human king as the “son of God” (or “firstborn”) should, instead, be read (exclusively) christologically. In other words, his cognitive framework suggests that an ordinary human cannot be the Son of God, so he looks for another character behind these texts. What he finds is the Christ.²⁸ As a result, the author suggests that something is distinct about God’s bestowal of the title son here—it is not even fit for a (human) king. For this reason, arguments that cite the previous attribution of these texts to the human Davidic monarch are not applicable when a prosopological reading strategy is acknowledged.

So what is exceptional about this Son? This question is initially answered in the statements about him in Hebrews 1.2–4:

[God] speaks to us through the Son, whom he appointed heir of all things and through whom he made the world [αἰών], who, being the radiance of [God’s] glory and the exact imprint of his being and bearing all things by the power of his word after making purification for sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

Together these statements contribute to a near consensus that the Son was in some way pre-existent.²⁹ For James D. G. Dunn, this is the “special” contribution of Hebrews to christology: “it seems to be the first of the NT writings to have embraced the specific thought of a pre-existent divine sonship.”³⁰ Dunn and others reach this conclusion largely because they perceive that the author’s depiction of the Son is dependent upon existing Logos- and Wisdom-traditions, in which Logos and

²⁷ Even setting aside the question of Hebrews’ use of a *testimonia*, which most now reject, *4QFlorilegium* demonstrates that a number of texts similar to those Hebrews uses (e.g., Ps 89.23; 2 Sam 7.11–14; Isa 8.11) were being read messianically.

²⁸ This seems even more likely with the introduction of Psalm 89.26–29, which provides an allusion to (or citation of) every necessary text (except 1 Chr 28.6; see n. 26).

²⁹ Attridge, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 34; Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 72; Koester, *Hebrews*, 104–5; Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 25–26; Hans-Friedrich Weiß, *Der Brief an die Hebräer*, KEK 13 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991), 143. Kenneth Schenck allows that Hebrews presents Christ as pre-existent “in some sense” (“Keeping His Appointment,” 92). I will discuss his reservations about the extent of Christ’s pre-existence in §2.1.4.

³⁰ Dunn, *Christology*, 55.

Sophia were pre-existent entities or manifestations of God’s power, and, indeed, several correspondences are present between the Son and these figures.³¹ Like the Son, it is “through [the Logos] that the world was put together” (δι’ οὗ σύμπας ὁ κόσμος ἐδημιουργεῖτο, *Leg.* 1.81), and the sacred Logos cleanses (ἐκάθηρεν) “us” (*Somn.* 1.226). Also like the Son, Sophia is the “radiance” (ἀπαύγασμα) of God (*Wis.* 7.26), and just as the Son bears (φέρω) all things (Heb 1.3b), she holds all things together well (διοικεῖ τὰ πάντα χρηστῶς, *Wis.* 8.1).

This correlation between the Son and the Logos or Sophia has caused some to doubt the personal nature of the Son’s pre-existence. They argue, like these entities, he is an extension of God, but not a distinct “person” prior to the Incarnation.³² But this extends the author’s underlying metaphors beyond what is presented in the text. Why should the author’s comparison at some points necessitate a near equation of these figures? Further, other evidence suggests a personal dimension to the Son in this chapter, such as the filial metaphor itself. A Father-Son relationship is by definition personal.³³ Certainly this evidence suggests the author was aware of Logos and Wisdom traditions and drew upon common themes to portray the Son (perhaps even with knowledge of these particular texts); however, little evidence suggests that the author is opting for a Logos- or Wisdom-christology.³⁴

³¹ For a more treatment of the relationship between Hebrews and Philo, see Ronald Williamson, *Philo and the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Leiden: Brill, 1970).

³² Dunn, *Christology*, esp. 219; Schenck, “Keeping His Appointment,” 56.

³³ Dunn, rightly, points out that Philo also called the Logos the “firstborn of God” (though πρωτόγονος; *Conf.* 146; *Som.* 1.215; *Christology*, 15), but he minimizes the personal dimension in Philo and Hebrews by claiming that the authors rarely call God “Father” (eliminating the interrelationship). Not only does Dunn fail to list Psalm 2.7 as a text where Hebrews does not “avoid” the term Father (*Christology*, 54), but he also fails to realize that the two texts in Hebrews 1.5 form a chiasm (Son-Father-Father-Son) that gives equal weight to both halves of the relationship. For more on the filial metaphor in Hebrews generally, as well as the issue of God’s “muted” paternity, see the useful study by Peeler (*You Are My Son*).

³⁴ Williamson has expanded the features of a Logos-christology to include: (1) the use of λόγος; (2) a notion of the figure’s pre-existence; (3) Wisdom motifs from “Hellenistic Judaism”; (4) a

Moreover, if the author was constructing a christology around these figures, then he missed several opportunities to make this clear. For example, in Hebrews 11.3, the author says it is “by faith we understand that the world was created by the word (ῥῆμα) of God.” If the author hoped to make a strong connection between the Son and the Logos, would readers not expect him to use λόγος here? Thus, the author here and elsewhere (e.g., 1.3) uses ῥῆμα when λόγος would benefit his agenda, and additionally, uses λόγος at times to denote an inferior or un-received message (e.g.):

For if the message [λόγος] spoken through angels was valid...how can we escape if we neglect so great a salvation...? (2.2–3)

But that word [λόγος], which they heard, did not benefit them... (4.2)

In addition to other instances like these (6.1; 12.19), neutral (4.13; 5.11; 13.17), as well as positive (4.12; 5.13; 7.28; 13.7; 13.22), occurrences of λόγος are certainly attested in Hebrews, but it is only in Hebrews 4.12 (“For the word of God is living and active...”) where an occurrence of λόγος points toward anything like a Logos-christology.³⁵ As for a Wisdom-christology, the word σοφία never occurs in Hebrews. Therefore, with evidence that some of these hesitations ought to be set aside, the personal pre-existence of this Son in the author’s thought remains more than a possibility.

role for the figure in creation; (5) an attribution of ὁ θεός to the figure; (6) an attribution of the title “Son”; (7) the use of speaking (or revelatory) verbs (e.g., λέγω or λαλέω). He adds that the development after Philo is a notion of the Logos as incarnate (“The Incarnation of the Logos in Hebrews,” *ExpTim* 95.1 [1983]: 4–8). This last point in particular demonstrates that Williamson anachronistically has constructed this list in light of the Gospel of John, particularly since he fails to note some features of Philo’s Logos that align with Hebrews’ (e.g., cleansing). If one asked whether John’s Logos figure fit with Hebrews’ christology, then the conceptual parallels demonstrated by Williamson allow an affirmative answer. But the conceptual overlap between Hebrews and the Gospel of John does not prove that the author of Hebrews was intentionally crafting a so-called “Logos-christology.” His few allusions to the figure do not demand an identification of the Son and the Logos. Jonathan Griffiths also seems reticent about this move by Williamson; see *Hebrews and Divine Speech*, sec. 2.2.1.

³⁵ See §4.1.4 for a brief discussion of this text, which is not likely christological.

Hebrews 1.6

With each citation addressed to the Son, the author develops his character with the titles and attributes ascribed to him by the Father. Hebrews 1.6 furthers his claim about Jesus being the Son (now the “Firstborn”), but also introduces another facet: the angels worship him. Here by utilizing the introductory formula as a transition, the author contrasts the previous verse (note the δέ), but also ties this text to the preceding:

And again, when bringing the firstborn [πρωτότοκον] into the world [οἰκουμένη], he says... (1.6a)

Unlike the other texts in this chapter, this citation and the one that follows do not have any explicitly identified addressees. In other words, rather than speaking “to” the Son or even the angels, the Father speaks “about” (πρός) the angels,³⁶ a pattern that continues with the three pairs of contrasting statements noted above (§2.1.2).³⁷ Although nearly every word in the introductory formula to this citation has been contested, in this space I can deal only with the meaning of οἰκουμένη and the impact of this lexical form for the timing of this statement.

The usual meaning of οἰκουμένη is the “inhabited earthly realm” or its “inhabitants,” which is represented by nearly all of its New Testament occurrences; however, Hebrews 2.5 provides an example of “extraordinary” usage in which the term signifies the “inhabited heavenly realm.”³⁸ To make this clear, the author further characterizes this as τὴν οἰκουμένην τὴν μέλλουσαν, περὶ ἧς λαλοῦμεν. The

³⁶ The addressees of these verses are rarely discussed. A few argue that verse 6 is directed to the angels (Koester, *Hebrews*, 193; Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 23; Kenneth L. Schenck, *Cosmology and Eschatology in Hebrews: The Settings of the Sacrifice*, SNTSMS 143 [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010], 121). Most argue that verse 7 is “about” the angels, rather than “to” them (citing πρὸς + accusative; see e.g., Attridge, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 57, n. 80; Cockerill, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 108; Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 120). The angels are certainly intended to hear the performative utterance, but I wonder if the lack of explicit address is intentional.

³⁷ The second is vv. 7–12; the third, vv. 13–14, though in verse 14 the author makes the statement.

³⁸ Bauer et al., *BDAG*, 699–700.

use of this lexical form in Hebrews 2.5 and the backward reference has caused many to ask: does the author also intend the inhabited heavenly world in Hebrews 1.6?

The weakness of this view is, of course, its appeal to a very rare use of οἰκουμένη—one perhaps so rare that the author clarified his irregular usage with the participle μέλλουσιν in 2.5. This point should not be taken lightly; however, evidence that οἰκουμένη was used to signify the “heavenly realm” can be found in the Greek Psalter.³⁹ Two texts of particular interest in Hebrews are (1) Greek Psalm 92.1:

The Lord reigns;
he is clothed in dignity;
the Lord is clothed with power and girds himself,
for he also makes firm τὴν οἰκουμένην, which will not be shaken
[ἥτις οὐ σαλευθήσεται]...

and (2) Greek Psalm 95.9–10:

Worship the Lord in his holy court;
let all the earth [γῆ] be shaken [σαλευθήτω] before him.
Say among the nations:
“The Lord reigns,
for he will also set right τὴν οἰκουμένην,
which will not be shaken [ἥτις οὐ σαλευθήσεται]...”

While one might argue that γῆ and οἰκουμένη are representative of the same realities presented in parallel, one is shaken and the other “will not be” (future). For the author of Hebrews, this contrast between the shaken and unshaken is integral to his argument in Hebrews 12:

at that time the voice shook [ἐσάλευσεν] the earth, but now it promises: “Once more I will shake [σεισω] not only τὴν γῆν but also τὸν οὐρανόν.” But the “once more” reveals the removal [μετάθεσιν] of the shakable things—the created things—in order that what remains is not shakable. (12.26–27)

³⁹ These texts were first alluded to in Albert Vanhoye, “L’οἰκουμένη dans l’Épître aux Hébreux,” *Bib* 45.2 (1964): 248–53. But my discussion is primarily indebted to David M. Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, NovTSup 141 (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 70–81.

Rather than utilizing the verb for “shaking” from Haggai 2.6 (σειώ) in the introductory formula, the author instead selects σάλευω, which, as Lane (among others) argues, is used “as an expression for the effect of divine judgment” in the Greek Psalter.⁴⁰ Within that corpus, what is “not shaken” refers to YHWH (9.6; 20.8; 45.6; 111.6), the one who trusts or obeys him (14.5; 15.8; 16.5; 29.7; 61.3; cf. 35.12), or Mount Zion (124.1), as well as the οἰκουμένη, but the earth (γῆ) is never described as “unshakable.”

Another text of interest to this discussion is (3) Greek Psalm 96.4, 7:

His lightning illuminates τῇ οἰκουμένῃ;
the earth [γῆ] sees and is shaken [ἐσαλεύθη]...⁴¹
Worship him, all his angels [προσκυνήσατε αὐτῷ, πάντες οἱ ἄγγελοι
αὐτοῦ]...

Previous scholars have also noted the thematic correspondence between this text and Hebrews 1.6. In fact, some posit that this is the text cited by the author,⁴² a view far more common prior to the discovery of the Qumran library.⁴³ Within those texts lay 4QDeuteronomy, which attested a Hebrew version of Deuteronomy 32.43 much closer to Hebrews than the LXX.⁴⁴ For this reason, I prefer to see Hebrews 1.6 as a citation of Deuteronomy, but this does not rule out a secondary allusion to Psalm 96.7. This text, after all, provides a reasonable explanation for why the author

⁴⁰ William L. Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, WBC 47b (Dallas, TX: Word, 1991), 481.

⁴¹ This line is very similar to Greek Psalm 76.19, which is another useful example.

⁴² Those arguing that Greek Psalm 96 is the source of this text are: Attridge, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 57; Stephen Motyer, “The Psalm Quotations of Hebrews 1: A Hermeneutic-Free Zone?,” *TynBul* 50.1 (1999): 18–19.

⁴³ For a discussion of the texts from Qumran as a “library,” see Sidnie White Crawford and Cecilia Wassen, eds., *The Dead Sea Scrolls at Qumran and the Concept of a Library*, STDJ 116 (Leiden: Brill, 2015).

⁴⁴ This text is also attested in Greek in Odes 2.43. While this position is commonly held, the best case is presented in: Gareth Lee Cockerill, “Hebrews 1:6: Source and Significance,” *BBR* 9 (1999): 51–64. References throughout to “the LXX” are to A. Rahlfs and Robert Hanhart, eds., *Septuaginta* (Stuttgart: Hendrickson, 2007). When *Vorlage* and variant traditions are in view, other language is preferred.

introduces the word οἰκουμένη here.⁴⁵ Even so, Psalm 96.7 on its own does not present a strong contrast between the earthly and heavenly realm since the two stand in parallel. But the author's use of σαλεύω in the introductory formula suggests a desire to allude to this broader tradition in the Greek Psalter. While this discussion cannot move beyond speculation, this proposal appears to cohere best with the internal evidence of Hebrews.

Therefore, it is possible that the author uses οἰκουμένη in Hebrews 1.6 to signify the “inhabited heavenly realm.” Two further points make the possibility even more likely. First, in Hebrews 2.5, the author clarifies the phrase τὴν οἰκουμένην τὴν μέλλουσάν with the relative clause περὶ ἧς λαλοῦμεν. When has he been speaking about the world to come? While this could refer only broadly to the eschatological elements in 1.1–2.4, it is also possible that the author refers not only generally but also specifically to his previous use of the term. In this case, the author might add μέλλουσάν in order to make certain his readers have not missed this nuance. It would not be the only instance when the author introduces a word or theme that will only later be explained (e.g., “son” in 1.2 or “purification of sins” in 1.3).⁴⁶

With this preponderance of evidence, it seems likely that the author is discussing the introduction of the Firstborn into the “inhabited heavenly realm.” If this is the case, then the likely time reference for the saying is the Son's exaltation.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ For other parallels between Hebrews 1.6 and Psalm 96, see Allen, *Deuteronomy and Exhortation*, 44–46.

⁴⁶ Another argument, put forth by P. C. B. Andriessen, suggests the introductory formula to this verse is an allusion to Deut 6.10 where YHWH brings the people into the Promised Land (ὅταν εἰσαγάγῃ σε κύριος ὁ θεός σου εἰς τὴν γῆν, cf. 11.29). While I disagree with Andriessen's insistence that the Deuteronomy allusion excludes an allusion to Psalm 89, the allusion to Deuteronomy is difficult to deny. The “Land” in Hebrews' theology would also fit better with a reference to the heavenly realm. See “La Teneur judéo-chrétienne de He 1:6 et 2:14b–3:2,” *NovT* 18.4 (1976): 293–313; as well as its precursor “De betekenis van Hebr. 1.6,” *StC* 35.1 (1960): 2–13.

⁴⁷ Others have argued that this refers to the *parousia* (arguing that πάλιν modifies εἰσαγάγῃ). The strongest case is presented in: Lukas Stolz, “Das Einführen des Erstgeborenen in die ‘οἰκουμένη’ (Hebr 1,6a),” *Bib* 95.3 (2014): 405–23.

When the Son enters the heavenly realm, all of its inhabitants are told that (even) God’s angels worship him. The degree of this adoration, though disputed,⁴⁸ within the context of Hebrews 1 (and Hebrews as a whole) is the worship deserved by one who bears the titles “Son of God” (1.5), “Lord” (1.10), and “God” (1.8), as well as the one who is described as Creator (1.7; 1.10–12; cf. 1.2).⁴⁹ Elsewhere in the New Testament, the angels worship Jesus also. Revelation 4–5 begins by portraying the four mysterious creatures and the twenty-four elders worshipping God, continuously singing “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty who was and is and is to come” (4.8). The scene continues with the Lamb being presented as the one worthy to take (and open) the scroll (5.7–8). When he takes it, they fall before him and sing a new song (5.8–10). Soon the thousands of angels join in: “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain...” (5.12). Together they praise the Lamb. Hebrews also presents a celebration of angels in 12.22. At Mount Zion, the people “have come to...innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven...”⁵⁰

In terms of a prosopological reading of Hebrews 1.6, the selection of Deuteronomy 32.43 is not as straightforward as the texts examined in Hebrews 1.5.

⁴⁸ For a more “reserved” account of what προσκυνέω entails in this text, see Kenneth L. Schenck, “The Worship of Jesus Among Early Christians: The Evidence of Hebrews,” in *Jesus and Paul: Global Perspectives in Honor of James D. G. Dunn for His 70th Birthday*, ed. B. J. Oropeza, C. K. Robertson, and Douglas C. Mohrmann, LNTS 414 (London: T&T Clark, 2009), 114–126.

⁴⁹ For more on the worship of Jesus in this text, see David M. Allen, “Who, What, and Why? The Worship of the Firstborn in Hebrews 1.6,” in *Mark, Manuscripts, and Monotheism: Essays in Honor of Larry W. Hurtado*, ed. Dieter Roth and Chris Keith, LNTS 528 (London: T&T Clark, 2015), 159–75.

⁵⁰ *Epistula Apostolorum* attests to this phenomenon as well: “And after he had said this and had ended the discourse with us, he said again to us, ‘Look. After three days and three hours he who sent me will come that I may go with him.’ And as he spoke there was thunder and lightning and an earthquake, and the heavens divided and a bright cloud came and took him away. And we heard the voice of many angels as they rejoiced and praised and said, ‘Assemble us, O priest, in the light of glory.’...” For this translation and notes on the text, see J. K. Elliott, ed., *The Apocryphal New Testament: A Collection of Apocryphal Christian Literature in an English Translation*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993).

In those texts, God is already speaking and addressing someone as his son. The fact that he was interpreted as directing this to an ordinary human posed a tension for the author of Hebrews that caused him to reinterpret these texts as an address from the Father to Jesus. The author's reading of Deuteronomy 32 instead appears to capitalize upon the ambiguity of the base text with regard to speakers.⁵¹

Deuteronomy 32 speaks of God in the third person in speech typically attributed to Moses, but also reports speech where God speaks in the first. Within Greek traditions we find the following shifts:

32.1–19	Moses speaks
32.20–25	God speaks (introduced by καὶ εἶπεν in 32.20)
32.26–36	Moses speaks (introduced by εἶπα in 32.26) ⁵²
32.37–42/43?	God speaks (introduced by καὶ εἶπεν κύριος in 32.37)
[32.43	Moses speaks (no introductory formula)?]

The ambiguity found in identifying the speaker of 32.43 is precisely the one utilized by the author of Hebrews. Typically, Deuteronomy 32.43 is interpreted as Moses' speech about God, but no explicit indication of a shift in speech takes place within the Greek Song. Instead, the shift in person—from first to third—is thought to be a signal of a new speaker. But what if the author of Hebrews interpreted this verse, not with a new speaker, but with a new subject? Deuteronomy proceeds in this way:

42 I [the Lord] will make my arrows drunk with blood—
and my dagger will devour flesh—
With the blood of the wounded and the captives,
from the head of the commanders of the enemies

43 Be glad with him, O Heavens;
let all the angels of God worship him...

The last line, interpreted by Hebrews as speech spoken by the Father about the Son, can in fact be read in this way in the original context, *if* a reader is content to refer to

⁵¹ For more on the Song of Moses and its use in early Christianity, see Allen, *Deuteronomy and Exhortation*, ch. 2.

⁵² Moses also reports the speech of the “enemies” in 32.27, but appears to resume speaking afterward.

two characters as “God.” The author of Hebrews makes clear that he is with his citation of Greek Psalm 44.7–8, where the Father says to the Son, “Your throne, O God, is forever.” Thus, by having YHWH continue to speak, rather than introducing another line in the Song spoken by Moses, the author is able to make this passage a command from the Father to worship the Son.

2.1.4. Hebrews 1.7–12: The Timelessness of the Son

Hebrews 1.7

In the second set of contrasting statements, the order reverses, and the Father speaks first about the angels:

Then, on the one hand, he says concerning the angels, “This one makes his angels winds and his servants flames of fire.”

This text, for the most part consistent with Greek Psalm 103.4 [104.4 MT], potentially intends three contrasts between the Son and the angels, which the author outlines with the use of this citation and the next. The first contrast is the difference in office. The angels are servants, but the Son is the anointed king.⁵³ The second is a contrast between permanence and mutability.⁵⁴ The angels are not in control; God can change them as he wishes. Looking ahead to the next two citations about the Son and his eternity, this depiction of the angels as changeable or transient appears to be the author’s primary reason for selecting this text.⁵⁵ But who is the agent—ὁ ποιῶν? If the agent is God the Father, then this citation is exceptional as the only

⁵³ For those who hold this to be the primary contrast, see Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 120–21; Martin and Whitlark, “Encomiastic Topics of Syncrisis,” 428. Note also the interesting parallel to Hebrews 3.1–6. Moses is also “inferior” because he is a servant.

⁵⁴ The LXX reads πῦρ φλέγον, rather than πυρὸς φλόγα. This verse is an instance where the author of Hebrews’ reading would not be possible with the MT (*contra* Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 120).

⁵⁵ So Jipp, “The Son’s Entrance,” 564; Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 28; Kenneth L. Schenck, “A Celebration of the Enthroned Son: The Catena of Hebrews 1,” *JBL* 120.3 (2001): 473–74; James W. Thompson, “Structure and Purpose of the Catena in Heb 1:5–13,” *CBQ* 38.3 (1976): 357.

text in Hebrews 1 not related to the Son in some way, which is not problematic in itself;⁵⁶ however, if the author wanted to make clear that this text was not about the Son, then it seems that he would need to clarify the agent more expressly, particularly due to the third person language. In other words, unless told otherwise or unless the material could not reasonably be applied to the Son, it seems most logical within the flow of the discourse to assume that the author is following the same formula throughout—especially since nothing in this text suggests a role that is not attributable to the Son within the author’s schema.

A final contrast highlighted by scholars is the potential difference in essence or ontological status between the Son, who is flesh and blood, and the angels, who are spirit.⁵⁷ A related (though not always correlated) contrast of essence is predicated upon the origins of these figures. Many (either implicitly or explicitly) suggest that Hebrews 1.7 also describes the *creation* of angels, reading this into ὁ ποιῶν.⁵⁸ This reading is corroborated by the fact that Psalm 104.4 is linked to the creation of angels in some early Jewish texts. For example, *Jubilees* describes the first day of creation as the day when “[God] created...all of the spirits that minister before him” including “the angels of the spirit of fire” and “the angels of the spirits of the winds.” This allusion is not definitive, but a similar collocation of “angels,” “spirits,” “winds,” and “fire” is present.⁵⁹ Comparable readings of Psalm 104.4 are

⁵⁶ Even so, this is the majority view, held by Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 120; Jipp, “The Son’s Entrance,” 562–63; Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 29; Peeler, *You Are My Son*, 55. The question is left open by Koester, *Hebrews*, 194. For an argument for the Son’s agency, see “Symmetry and Theology,” 511–13.

⁵⁷ For a discussion of this contrast, see Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic*, 49–52. See also §3.2 for a more thorough discussion of the “somatic” Son.

⁵⁸ See Cockerill, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 108; Meier, “Symmetry and Theology”; possibly also Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 29. The evidence against this reading is the wide semantic range that the author evidences for ποιέω. For a summary of its use in Hebrews, see Eric F. Mason, “Hebrews and Second Temple Jewish Traditions on the Origins of Angels,” in *Hebrews in Contexts*, ed. Gabriella Gelardini and Harold W. Attridge, AGJU 91 (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 86.

⁵⁹ In support of this allusion see, Jacques van Ruiten, “Angels and Demons in the Book of Jubilees,” in *Angels: The Concept of Celestial Beings—Origins, Development and Reception*, ed.

also attested elsewhere (e.g., *2 Baruch* 21.6–7; *2 Enoch* 29.3); however, an alternative reading, attested by *4 Ezra*, offers another helpful interpretive tradition. In *4 Ezra* 8.20–22, Ezra prays to God and in praise describes him as the one “at whose command [angels] are changed to wind and fire...”⁶⁰ For this author, God has command over even the angels. This reading offers a useful parallel to Hebrews where the author’s contrast between the Son and these beings is likely predicated not on some flawed angelology, but instead on an assumption that the angels occupy a place of prominence in the hierarchy of heavenly beings. As we saw with Isocrates’ comparison of Evagoras and Cyrus, authors utilizing *synkrisis* select the most impressive possible foil for their subjects. Nevertheless, the two readings just mentioned, represented by *Jubilees* and *4 Ezra*, are not mutually exclusive. The angels could serve an impressive literary foil even if they are presented as created beings. So without any additional commentary from the author, it is unclear whether Hebrews should be read in accordance with either (or both) of these traditions.⁶¹ Still, if elements from these readings are present, they are likely secondary to the author’s contrast between the permanence of the Son and the impermanence of the angels, which remains a focus in the next two citations also.

Friedrich V. Reiterer, Tobias Nicklas, and Karin Schöpflin, *Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Yearbook 2007* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007), 587–89; Raija Sollamo, “The Creation of Angels and Natural Phenomena Intertwined in the Book of Jubilees (4QJub^a): Angels and Natural Phenomena as Characteristics of the Creation Stories and Hymns in Late Second Temple Judaism,” in *Biblical Traditions in Transmission: Essays in Honour of Michael A. Knibb*, ed. Charlotte Hempel and Judith Lieu, *JSJSup* 11 (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 274–76.

⁶⁰ Michael E. Stone and Matthias Henze, *4 Ezra and 2 Baruch: Translations, Introductions, and Notes* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013), 53–54.

⁶¹ For more on traditions about the origins of angels, and these texts in particular, see Mason, “Origins of Angels”; as well as his, “2 Baruch, 4 Ezra, and the Epistle to the Hebrews: Three Approaches to the Interpretation of Psalm 104:4,” in *Interpreting 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch*, ed. Gabriele Boccaccini and Jason Zurawski, *Library of Second Temple Studies* 87 (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 61–71.

Hebrews 1.8–9

The second half of the author's second pair of contrasting quotations comes in verses 8–9. In this unit, the citation of Greek Psalm 44.7–8 is linked to the prior by the particle *δέ*, as well as the points of contrast mentioned above:

On the other hand, to the Son [he says]:
“Your throne, O God, is forever,
and the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom.
You loved righteousness and hated lawlessness,
which is why your God, oh God, has anointed you
with the oil of gladness over your companions.”⁶²

In its original context, this psalm is thought to address the Davidic king (likely at a marriage ceremony), commending his character and extending his dominion “forever” (εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος).⁶³ For many, the psalm in its original setting attributes a metaphorical divine status to a human Davidic monarch, but in Hebrews, it attributes an actual divine status to Jesus.⁶⁴ How can this text without any commentary from the author obviously accomplish something so different than it did in its original setting?⁶⁵ The short answer is: it does not. By utilizing prosopological exegesis, the author suggests instead that this psalm was spoken from

⁶² Most manuscripts differ only slightly from the LXX. In the second line, the LXX reads ῥάβδος εὐθύτητος ἢ ῥάβδος τῆς βασιλείας σου, rather than καὶ ἡ ῥάβδος τῆς εὐθύτητος ῥάβδος τῆς βασιλείας σου, as represented by Hebrews. The most substantive textual issue pertains to the second σου in verse 8. P⁴⁶, 8, and B read αὐτοῦ. This reading is certainly the more difficult and is attested by some substantial manuscripts, but the resulting reading “Your (the Son’s) throne is God (the Father) and the (Son’s) sceptre of uprightness is a sceptre of the (Father’s) kingdom” (via Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 123) is very confusing. It also necessitates the text being “about” the Son, rather than addressed to him.

⁶³ See Attridge, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 58; Herbert W. Bateman IV, “Psalm 45:6–7 and Its Christological Contributions to Hebrews,” *TJ* 22 (2001): 16; Murray J. Harris, “The Translation of ‘Elohim’ in Psalm 45:7–8,” *TynBul* 35 (1984): 66.

⁶⁴ While most agree that ὁ θεός is vocative in Greek traditions, as well as in Hebrews, some maintain that it is nominative, rendering the text: “Your throne is God [or is of God] forever.” For a summary of this and other positions, see Harris, “The Translation of ‘Elohim’ in Psalm 45.” Attridge assures us that “[i]f there is any doubt that our homilist wants to have Ps. 45:7–8 construed as an address to the Son as θεός, the next citation, from Ps. 102:27–29 dispels that doubt” (“The Psalms in Hebrews,” in *The Psalms in the New Testament*, ed. Steve Moyise and Maarten J. J. Menken [London: T&T Clark International, 2004], 202).

⁶⁵ For this argument in another form, see James D. G. Dunn, *Did the First Christians Worship Jesus?: The New Testament Evidence* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010), 138; Hurst, “The Christology of Hebrews 1 and 2,” 159–60; Schenck, “A Celebration of the Enthroned Son,” 474–75.

the person of Jesus. For him, the usual reading attributing even metaphorical divine status to the Davidic monarch is incorrect: this is a text about the Son. Justin also reads Greek Psalm 44.7–8 prosopologically. It “speaks in this way of Christ” (*Dial.* 38.3) and “expressly shows that he is to be worshipped as both God and Christ” (63.5). Justin, like the author of Hebrews, cannot conceive of applying this text to anyone else. Thus in Hebrews 1.8–9, the Father (according to the author) establishes not only Jesus’ divinity but also his perpetuity and upstanding moral character, and by extension he confirms his anointing as king “over his companions” (παρὰ τοὺς μετόχους σου).⁶⁶

The “companions” in verse 9 are identified by some as either (1) the angels, (2) believers (i.e., the “sons and daughters” whom he will bring to glory; 2.10), or (3) some combination of the two.⁶⁷ Although some have argued that this chapter’s focus on the angels makes them the obvious referent,⁶⁸ this fails to acknowledge its argument. The Son is *not* like the angels, as each citation demonstrates;⁶⁹ he is, however, “made like his brothers and sisters in every way” (2.10–18)—his “siblings,” who are later described as those who are sharers (or become sharers) in the “heavenly calling” (κλήσεως ἐπουρανίου μέτοχοι, 3.1), Christ (μέτοχοι... τοῦ Χριστοῦ γεγόναμεν, 3.14), the Spirit (μετόχους γεννηθέντας πνεύματος ἁγίου, 6.4), and perhaps also discipline (παιδείας ἧς μέτοχοι γεγόνασιν πάντες, 12.8).⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Bates argues that this is the Spirit speaking to the Son about the Father (Bates, *The Birth of the Trinity*, 163–65). While this reading is possible, as attested in Irenaeus (*Adv. Haer.* 3.6.1) and Justin (*Dial.* 56.14–15), it seems unlikely. This author does not take issue with God speaking about himself in third person (see 1.6).

⁶⁷ So Murray J. Harris, “The Translation of ‘Elohim’ in Psalm 45:7–8,” *TynBul* 35 (1984): 65–89.

⁶⁸ Attridge, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 60; Bateman, “Psalm 45,” 16; David A. deSilva, *Perseverance in Gratitude: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 99; Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 30; Meier, “Symmetry and Theology,” 516.

⁶⁹ This point is emphasized by Moffitt (*Atonement and the Logic*, 51–52).

⁷⁰ Cockerill, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 111; Matthew C. Easter, *Faith and the Faithfulness of Jesus in Hebrews*, SNTSMS 160 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 67; Koester, “The Epistle to the Hebrews in Recent Study,” 195.

Although the Son is placed over them, the author consistently utilizes this lexical form to demonstrate their unity—both with the Son and with each other.

Hebrews 1.10–12

The author then moves to a citation of Greek Psalm 101.26–28 in Hebrews 1.10–12.

The introductory formula is only καί, but presumably, Hebrews 1.8 provides the necessary information about the characters involved. The Father speaks again to the Son:

You from the beginning, Lord, laid the foundations of the earth,
and the heavens are the works of your hands.
They will be destroyed, but you remain,
and all things will wear out like a garment,
And like a cloak you will roll them up,
and they will be changed like a garment,
But you are the same, and your years will not run out.⁷¹

At first glance, this is a particularly interesting selection by the author of Hebrews.

In most other instances, he has selected a text where God the Father was already the speaker and identified other unspecified participants (e.g., the addressees); here,

however, the author has selected a psalm that appears to be without any dialogue.

Instead, it is just a Psalmist's cry to the Father. But this is not the case in Greek

traditions. Throughout Greek Psalm 101 (MT 102), the speaker describes his

affliction and plight as a temporary, mortal being, while praising God for his

permanence. Verse 24 of the MT contains the consonants ענה, which can designate

one of two verbal roots. The MT seems to favor one option (I: "to oppress or

⁷¹ Several differences are present between Hebrews' quoted text and the LXX. The most substantial found in Hebrews are: (line 1) σύ is farther forward; (line 5) ἀλλάξεις reads ἐλίξεις; (line 6) ὡς ἱμάτιον is present (a second time from line 4). While many Hebrews scholars have tended to claim that the author made these changes, each of the readings is found in other traditions. (Most notably, (3) is found in 11QPs^a.) For a summary of this evidence, see Docherty, *Old Testament in Hebrews*, 136.

humiliate),” while the Greek favors another (II: “to answer”), represented by ἀπεκρίθη.⁷² The latter introduces a dialogue between the speaker and God:

He [God] answered him by means of his strength [ἀπεκρίθη αὐτῷ ἐν ὀδῷ ἰσχύος αὐτοῦ], ...“You are from the beginning, Lord...”
(101.24b–26a)

Greek traditions not only introduce the curious “answer,” but also another potential participant. Who is the one who receives the answer (the “him”)? Throughout this psalm, the speaker has referred to himself in the first person, and God in the second, as well as the third. But in verse 24, we have two third person references. Who is the other participant? Perhaps the author of Hebrews was also intrigued by this question. Nevertheless, he seems to either overlook 101.24b–25, where the one answering laments his own temporal existence,⁷³ or reason that the answer does not begin until verse 26. In other words, the author, seeing that he is to expect some answer, may then look forward to the portion that can be read with God (or in this case more specifically the exalted Christ) in mind. If this is the strategy utilized by the author, then it is not the most straightforward interpretation in Hebrews 1, but even if this insight is not the best explanation, then this still does not minimize the result of the text’s application to Christ in Hebrews.

In Hebrews, the addressee of Greek Psalm 101, the Son, is called “Lord” (κύριε), a title attributed to Christ elsewhere in Hebrews also (2.3; 7.14; 12.14; 13.20).⁷⁴ Thus between this citation and the prior (Ps 44.7–8), the author has

⁷² The Rahlfs edition attests no variant readings.

⁷³ The difficult portion is: “Report to me the paucity of my days. Do not take me at the midpoint of my days; forever are your years.” Bruce (essentially followed by Bacon) argues that the “days” are the time when Jerusalem will be restored (cf. verses 13–15; Bruce, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 62; Benjamin W. Bacon, “Heb. 1,10–12 and the Septuagint Rendering of Ps. 102.23,” *ZNW* 3 [1902]: 283). This view is not without its difficulties, as noted by C. F. D. Moule, *The Birth of the New Testament*, 2nd ed. (London: Black, 1966), 79; Schenck, “Keeping His Appointment,” 104. Bates postulates that the speaker is anonymous or the Spirit, but the latter option retains the difficulty of the verses above (*The Birth of the Trinity*, 170–71).

⁷⁴ In Hebrews “Lord” primarily refers to the Father and is found in other Scripture citations (7.21; 8.8, 9, 10, 11; 10.16, 30; 12.5, 6; 13.6; cf. 8.2). As Docherty points out, the two lords presented

presented Jesus as both God and Lord. Although some quibble with the meaning of these titles being applied to Jesus—arguing they hold little more significance for him than they did for the previous royal recipient, for instance—the rest of this citation does little to undermine his lordship. In it, the author continues to contrast the evanescence of the angels and the eternity of the Son by presenting first the Son’s role in creation (1.10), and then his stability from the time when the world is “rolled up” and “destroyed” until eternity (1.11–12). Like the angels, particularly in contrast to the Son, the earth is temporary (in its current “shakable” state; cf. 12.25–29),⁷⁵ but Jesus is always the same (cf. Heb 13.8).

Even so, the Son’s presence at or role in creation presented by the author, for some, does not allow for the necessary “distinction between his eternal and his temporal existence.”⁷⁶ As Caird argues, when Christ is exalted to his “cosmic role,” he is raised above the angels; he is praised for his role in creation simply because “he is the man in whom the divine Wisdom has been appointed to dwell, so as to make him the bearer of the whole purpose of creation.”⁷⁷ He was not present at creation, but is “*figuratively* deemed so” (emphasis original).⁷⁸ This is predicated on the problematic assumption that the author of Hebrews is operating under the rubric of a Wisdom- or Logos-christology (see §2.1.3). Adding to that discussion, now near the end of the catena, it seems even clearer that the author has presented the Son as a

by this verse (the speaker and the addressee) set up the quotation to Greek Psalm 109.1 where “the Lord said to my Lord...” despite the author’s omission of this portion of text. See *Old Testament in Hebrews*, 166–67.

⁷⁵ James W. Thompson argues that the earth and heavens are representative of the created realm that the angels inhabit. See “Structure and Purpose of the Catena in Heb 1,” 359. In the remainder of that article, Thompson argues that the author’s primary motive for the catena is to present “Christ [as] the one who abides” (p. 363).

⁷⁶ Caird, “Son by Appointment,” 1:76.

⁷⁷ Caird, “Son by Appointment,” 1:76.

⁷⁸ Schenck, “Keeping His Appointment,” 106. Schenck is summarizing Caird, but also advocating for his position.

personal, embodied entity.⁷⁹ He is a Son to the Father (1.5–6), and he is a companion to humans (1.9). Further, he is in conversation. The Father speaks to him (1.5–13; 5.5), and he speaks back (2.12–13; 10.5–7). No single citation (or speech) or title proves this definitively, but the evidence taken as a whole suggests it.⁸⁰

2.1.5. Hebrews 1.13–14: The Submission to the Son

Hebrews 1.13

Another text that early interpreters used to ascribe lordship to Jesus was Psalm 109.1 (see §1.1.1): “The Lord said to my Lord, ‘sit at my right hand...’” Some Christian writers explain this text as the Spirit (through David) describing the Father’s speech to the Son (e.g., Tertullian, *Prax.* 11; Irenaeus, *Haer.* 3.6.1).⁸¹ Justin, exceptionally, quotes the entire psalm (twice: *Dial.* 32; 83). In *Dialogue with Trypho* 32, he uses an abbreviated prosopological introductory formula to communicate that David spoke “on behalf of the holy prophetic Spirit” (ὕπὸ τοῦ ἁγίου προφητικοῦ πνεύματος). In the Synoptic Tradition, Jesus highlights the tension that arises from identifying the son of David as the second lord:

Also, continuing [his previous response] while teaching in the temple courts, Jesus said, “How do the teachers of the law say that the Christ is the Son of David? ... David himself calls him ‘Lord,’ so how is this his son?” (Mark 12.35–37; cf. Matt 22.41–46; Luke 20.41–44)

⁷⁹ For a more thorough discussion of Jesus as “embodied” both on earth and in heaven, see Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic*.

⁸⁰ For those who argue against the Son’s active or actual role in creation, this citation is selected for its explanation of the Son’s permanence, as discussed above. If this is the author’s primary point, and the references to creation and the address of “Lord” are incidental, then why did he not begin the quotation at the next verse (αὐτοὶ ἀπολοῦνται...)? This quotation is much longer than the others, and his use of the previous introductory formula and citation to clarify participants makes this verse unnecessary, per their argument.

⁸¹ For more on the use of Psalm 109 in early Christian traditions, see Marie-Josèphe Rondeau, “Le ‘Commentaire des Psaumes’ de Diodore de Tarse et l’exégèse antique du Psaume 109/110,” *RHR* 176.1 (1969): 5–33.

Although only implicitly, the author of Hebrews appears to make this same interpretive move; he, however, only quotes the content of the discussion between the “lords,” drawing upon the application of κύριος introduced in 1.10–12. Thus, while the author’s citation of Psalm 109.1 does not call Jesus “Lord,” it underlies the logic of his reading.

Hebrews 1.13 begins this citation with essentially the same introductory formula as the first in the series in 1.5. The author asks again:

But to whom among the angels did God ever say:
 “Sit at my right hand,
 Until I make your enemies a footstool under your feet”?⁸²

With the repetition of the citation formula, the author brackets the catena, giving the first and last texts prominence.⁸³ In Hebrews 1.13 the citation formula (as in 1.5) implies that no angel would be given this seat at the Father’s right hand (nor in the Synoptic Gospels would the “son of David”). This text is essential to understanding the author’s argument in Hebrews 2.6–8, which cites Greek Psalm 8.5–7 where the “Son of Man” is made lower than the angels. But even though this figure (whether Jesus or humanity, of which Jesus is a part) is made lower, the angels’ “rank” moves only because humanity’s status is in flux; at no point are the angels ever “exalted” (only temporarily higher). Hebrews 1.13 and other references to Psalm 109 present Jesus in his exaltation. For the author, his session is representative of his completed, efficacious work (10.11–12).⁸⁴ It is a sign of his once-for-all sacrifice that he no

⁸² This introductory formula is introduced with the perfect verb εἶρηκεν, highlighting this speech and alluding to an antecedent event or assumption, possibly the citation in 1.5. See Steven E. Runge, “The Discourse Function of the Greek Perfect Indicative in Romans” (presented at the Evangelical Theological Society, San Diego, CA, 2014). For a broader introduction to the current debates on Greek tense, see also Madison N. Pierce and Benjamin E. Reynolds, “The Perfect Tense-Form and the Son of Man in John 3.13: Developments in Greek Grammar as a Viable Solution to the Timing of the Ascent and Descent,” *NTS* 60.1 (2014): 149–55.

⁸³ Cockerill, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 114; Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 32.

⁸⁴ *Contra* Mark Saucy, “Exaltation Christology in Hebrews: What Kind of Reign?,” *TJ* 14.1 (1993): 41–62. He sees this image as a “passive” symbol of the Son waiting for the subjection of his enemies.

longer stands at the altar, but takes a seat next to his Father. It also, as the author makes clear in chapter 2, is a presentation of the Son awaiting the submission of all things. Even though “we” do not yet (οὐπω) “see all things being submitted, we do see Jesus...crowned with glory and honor...” (2.8–9). The kingly imagery found in that verse (i.e., Jesus is “crowned”) is also found within the text of Psalm 109, particularly verse 1 that emphasizes his enthronement.⁸⁵

Hebrews 1.14

To round out his well-crafted catena, the author finishes with the question: “Are not [angels] all ministering spirits sent for service on behalf of those who are to inherit salvation?”⁸⁶ This question, while serving as both a summary and a transition, is dependent upon Hebrews 1.13. After asking if any angel has ever been addressed by the words of Greek Psalm 109.1, knowing the answer is “no,” the author reinforces his point by reminding his audience that it would be absurd to address the angels in this way because they are merely “ministering spirits” (λειτουργικά πνεύματα). This phrase is a likely allusion to Greek Psalm 103.4, also found in Hebrews 1.7:

ὁ ποιῶν τοὺς ἀγγέλους αὐτοῦ πνεύματα
καὶ τοὺς λειτουργοὺς αὐτοῦ πᾶρ φλέγον.

The parallelism in this verse suggests that the λειτουργοί are the angels. Thus in Hebrews 1.14 the author merges two terms used to refer to angels in order to remind his readers of the content of this text: the angels are mutable servants. But here in 1.14 the author goes beyond mere summary. He presents the angels not only as servants of Christ (as they are presented in 1.6), but also as servants of humanity.

⁸⁵ For more on the imagery behind this verse, see David R. Anderson, *The King-Priest of Psalm 110 in Hebrews*, Studies in Biblical Literature 21 (New York: Peter Lang, 2001).

⁸⁶ Unlike the questions in verses 5 and 13, this question grammatically expects a “yes” (Friedrich Blass and Albert Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, trans. Robert W. Funk [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961], §427).

They are “sent” to serve those “who are to inherit salvation.”⁸⁷ Thus while angels occupy a higher position in the author’s hierarchy of heavenly beings (as 2.7 confirms), their principal purpose (as presented in 1.14) is to serve on behalf of humanity. Even when the Son occupies his lower position, he is always served by the angels.

2.1.6. Summary

In a sense, Hebrews 1.1–14 provides a preliminary statement of the author’s understanding of the divinity of the Son. In it the author introduces his text as a whole and presents his primary argument about the Son’s position over the angels. To give his argument a particular level of authority he utilizes prosopological exegesis, presenting several Scripture citations being spoken by God to the Son and about the angels. This method allows the author to present the Son as superior not only to the angels, but to all those not addressed by this speech. By reinterpreting these texts previously applied to a human Davidic monarch, the author also excludes any person identified before now. They present Jesus as the Son of God (1.5), more specifically the Firstborn, whom the angels worship (1.6). Although they are transient servants, whom God orders, the Son is unchangeable and everlasting—particularly in comparison to the angels and the entire created realm (1.7–12; cf. 1.14). The Son sits at the Father’s right hand, waiting for the time when he will receive all things as his inheritance (1.13). The Father calls this Son “God” (1.8–9) and “Lord” (1.10) and recalls his role in the creation of the heavens and earth (1.10–12).⁸⁸ Hebrews elevates the Son above the angels and all of creation.

⁸⁷ Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 132–33.

⁸⁸ The Father is *not* saying that Jesus is his God and Lord, but instead is conferring titles to be used by the people. One near parallel in modern language usage is sometimes one parent will refer

2.2. Hebrews 5.1–10 and 7.1–28: God Speaks to the High Priest

The seven quotations spoken by the Father in Hebrews 1 recall how the Son is unlike any other, besides perhaps his Father. This one set over his companions (1.9) is truly remarkable, even in comparison to the angels. But how does he fare within humanity? Hebrews 2, as we shall see (§3.1), outlines how Jesus is like those who are his “siblings” (2.12) and how he acts on their behalf (2.17). Though he is exemplary among them, the Son is not ashamed to call them “brothers and sisters”—another point that the author makes by means of prosopological exegesis. This interplay between the differences and similarities for Jesus and the rest of humanity also helps to set up the divine discourse in Hebrews 5 and 7. Here the Father speaks again; however, this time Jesus’ role as son is secondary to another role that the Father confers. He is also a high priest. Jesus is like the human high priests, but as one who is without sin (4.15), and who lives forever (7.24), his priesthood is of another kind. Jesus is a high priest “in the order of Melchizedek” (κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ), but what does this entail? The author explores this question through his use of various traditions in addition to the quotations spoken by the Father. The section to follow will discuss the Father’s quotations of Greek Psalms 2.7 and 109.4 throughout Hebrews 5 and 7. Unlike Hebrews 1 where the author quotes seven texts with little comment, in these chapters the author explains the relevance of God’s speech at length.

to the other as “Dad” or “Mom” when speaking to their children, but this of course does not imply that the s/he is the other parent’s mom or dad.

2.2.1. Hebrews 5.1–10: God Calls His High Priests

Before discussing the quotations themselves, let us first trace the argument leading up to them. Hebrews 5.1, though typically cited as the beginning of a new unit, is logically and syntactically dependent upon what precedes it (note the γάρ).⁸⁹ The comparison of Aaron and Christ as high priests is offered in support of the author's prior claim: "Therefore, [because we have a great high priest who can empathize with our weaknesses (4.15)], let us approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we might receive mercy and find grace for help in our time of need." The first clause describes that which is only true of one priest, Jesus: "we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God..." This distinct aspect of Jesus' work grounds the hortatory subjunctive that follows: "let us hold firmly to our confession." This exhortation is supported by the next sentence: "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who was tested in every way, like we are, [yet is] without sin." This explanation is typically interpreted as a contrast between the other high priests and Jesus, despite the author's mention of "every high priest" being able to "deal gently" (5.2: μετριοπαθεῖν) with both those who are ignorant and those who are going astray. Rather than understanding συμπαθέω and μετριοπαθέω as near synonyms, Harold Attridge identifies a subtle difference between these two verbs: "The ordinary high priest controls his anger; Christ actively sympathizes."⁹⁰ While Christ also controls his anger, the other priests are unable to experience "our weaknesses" to the extent that Christ does since he has been tested in every way. In other words,

⁸⁹ "Γάρ introduces explanatory material that strengthens or supports what precedes. This may consist of a single clause, or it may be a longer digression" (Steven E. Runge, *Discourse Grammar of the Greek New Testament: A Practical Introduction for Teaching and Exegesis* [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2010], 39). The connection is recognized by Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 116.

⁹⁰ Attridge, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 144.

Jesus experiences *every* human weakness (and test), while each high priest only experiences his own individual weakness.

Every high priest that God appoints is human because the human propensity to sin (per Hebrews) ensures that the priest is able to deal gently with those on whose behalf he ministers. *In theory* then, all high priests are obligated to offer sin offerings that correspond to their own sins (5.3: περὶ αὐτοῦ προσφέρειν περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν). But as the author makes clear in 4.15, this is not necessary *in application* for Jesus; he was tested in every way, but remained χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας. Thus in this section the focus is on Jesus' solidarity with his priestly brothers, making attempts to untangle what is true of all high priests and what is true of only Aaronic high priests unnecessary; all are in view in Hebrews 5.1–4.⁹¹ After telling readers what is true of high priests (5.1–3), Hebrews 5.4 tells what is not true of them. Whereas *every* high priest is taken from humanity (5.1), *no* priest takes the honor of the role upon himself (5.4: οὐχ ἑαυτῷ τις λαμβάνει τὴν τιμὴν), but instead he is called by God, just like Aaron was (καθὼςπερ καὶ Ααρών).⁹² The author continues:

Thus Christ also did not glorify himself to become high priest, but the one who spoke to him [ἀλλ' ὁ λαλήσας πρὸς αὐτον] [glorified him]:

“You are my son;
today I have begotten you.”

And in another place he says:

“You are a priest forever in the likeness of Melchizedek.” (5.5–6)

Just as he does in Hebrews 1, the author grounds his claims about who the Son is by quoting the Father.

⁹¹ The author uses a similar strategy in Hebrews 9.22–23. See §3.2.4.

⁹² Though the author may be referring to a more general tradition, the most likely point of reference is Numbers 18. It is here that God speaks directly to Aaron (and not to Moses, e.g.) and outlines his priestly duties, as well as his sons'.

Another common feature between these two passages is the material quoted. The catena in Hebrews 1 of course begins with the same citation of Psalm 2.7 and ends with a citation of Greek Psalm 109.1. The pair of citations in Hebrews 5 instead ends with Psalm 109.4, but by repeating the exact reference of the first citation and by referring to a nearby reference for the last, the author draws upon the prior quotations, while also developing the material.⁹³ The author's desire to refer back to the first citation in Hebrews 1 is also confirmed by the introductory formula to Psalm 2.7: ἀλλ' ὁ λαλήσας πρὸς αὐτόν. The first feature of note is the aorist tense-form verb, only used three times in active introductory formulas where the Father speaks in Hebrews (1.5; 5.5; 11.18); in the remaining majority the author uses the present tense-form (1.6; 1.7; 3.7; 5.6; 6.14; 7.21; 8.8).⁹⁴ While granted the aorist can certainly be used to describe a non-past action, here a past time-reference fits best with both the context and the contrast between this speech and the next that follows.⁹⁵

Similarly, by referring to the participants involved with this level of reference, the author expects that the readers will use their additional knowledge to fill in the gaps.⁹⁶ He has told them who speaks these words to whom in Hebrews 1, and rather than repeating the participants here, which might cause this citation to be read independently of the other, he elides that information. As such, the author reminds his readers of the prior contrast, and presumably does not introduce another

⁹³ Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 118.

⁹⁴ He also on rare occasions uses the perfect tense-form (1.13; 12.26; 13.5; cf. 8.5).

⁹⁵ Additionally, the other two aorist forms might be explained by other aspects of the context. Hebrews 11.18 clearly refers to a prior, historical event for the author. Hebrews 1.5 with the adverb πότε could point to a gnomic aorist, referring not to the time at which the Son was addressed, but the enduring time of the angels *not* being addressed.

⁹⁶ Attridge, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 145. For a more thorough discussion of participant reference theory in New Testament linguistic analysis, see Stephen H. Levinsohn, *Discourse Features of New Testament Greek: A Coursebook on the Information Structure of New Testament Greek* (Dallas, TX: SIL International, 2000), 135–49; Runge, *Discourse Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, 257–61.

between the Son and the other high priests. In other words, the author might have introduced the quotation, “To whom among the priests did God ever say...,” but instead, he employs another strategy. Whereas the Son is unlike the angels, particularly as one who is flesh and blood, he is like the humans and thereby like the other high priests. The author does begin to draw out the special nature of this high priest, but only after he makes clear how he stands thoroughly within a tradition of the human high priests. This difference between the two chapters further illustrates some of the flexibility found in prosopological readings. Hebrews 1 explicitly emphasizes the non-addressees of the Father’s speech, but here they are only implied. It still certainly seems to be the case that God would not say these things to the Levitical priests, or anyone else for that matter, but here the importance is placed on whom he does address, rather than whom he does not.

Nevertheless, in Hebrews 5 when the author refers back to the seven quotations that the Father spoke in Hebrews 1, the author’s claim that the Son does not bestow honor upon himself, allows readers to also infer that the Father addressing Jesus as “God” (1.8–9) and “Lord” (1.10–12) as well as “Son” (1.5–6a) is of his own accord. The conferral of these titles, in addition to calling Jesus to be a high priest, are also examples of how the Father glorifies the Son (5.5).⁹⁷ The second citation of Psalm 109.4 introduces the new priesthood where Christ serves—in the likeness of Melchizedek. Following from a more passive portrayal of the Son, one who is “called” and “glorified” and “appointed,” the author transitions into a presentation of his obedience while on earth. Hebrews 5.7–10 in a sense justifies God’s selection of the Son, while also reminding readers just how his priesthood

⁹⁷ As the only occurrence of *δοξάζω* in Hebrews, this verse presents a distinct facet of the Father-Son relationship, though one that is comparable to the God-priest relationship. (Note the use of *καθὼς περ/οὕτως*.)

connects to their salvation (5.9). This section leads to a slight digression (5.11–6.12) that then reminds the readers of the “unchangeable” nature of God’s promise (6.13–20). The promise was confirmed by an oath, and so, as we shall see, is Christ’s priesthood.

2.2.2. Hebrews 7.1–28: The Son Like Melchizedek

While Hebrews’ focus on Christ as both priest and offering is relatively distinct within the New Testament, the mention of Melchizedek is without parallel. Since this figure elsewhere appears only twice within Scripture, but received considerable attention in Second Temple literature, theories about the source material for Melchizedek’s depiction in Hebrews are innumerable. This discussion, therefore, will by no means be exhaustive, but instead will progress through the most salient details for how divine discourse presented by means of prosopological exegesis contributes to the argument of Hebrews 7. Nevertheless, some attention to the potential sources is in order.

Genesis 14.18–20

Genesis 14 recalls Abraham’s encounter with warring kings. In this account, Abraham has an encounter with two kings in particular—the King of Sodom and the King of Salem (Gen 14.17–24). Just as Hebrews recounts, Melchizedek is both king and priest of the God Most High (Heb 7.1; Gen 14.18). He met Abraham “when returning from the defeat of the kings” (Heb 7.1; cf. Gen 14.1–16), blessed him (Heb 7.1; Gen 14.18–20), and received a tithe from him (Heb 7.2; Gen 14.20). What is not recounted in Hebrews is Melchizedek’s gift of bread and wine (Gen 14.18), which presumably Abraham accepts; conversely, the King of Sodom attempts to offer

Abraham a gift or exchange of goods for his nephew Lot and some others within his party, which Abraham sternly rejects (Gen 14.21–24). Another detail that the author of Hebrews notes is that the name Melchizedek, a name translated from its Hebrew equivalent, can be interpreted as though this refers to a general, even axiomatic, “king of righteousness” (7.2: βασιλεὺς δικαιοσύνης), or to a more specific individual named “King of Righteousness.” Whereas in this context (Gen 14) the construct relationship between מלך and צדק clearly refers to the name of this king (מלך צדק), elsewhere this is not necessarily so.⁹⁸

Hebrew Psalm 110.4 and Greek Psalm 109.4

The second place where מלך and צדק occur in a construct relationship is Hebrew Psalm 110.4. Here, while Greek traditions read Μελχισεδεκ, obviously interpreting the words as a name, the consonantal Hebrew text does not dictate this. Psalm 110 may depict the specific “King of Salem” also found in Genesis 14, or it may depict a “righteous king” who otherwise remains anonymous.⁹⁹ A related interpretive issue is the question of the role of this noun phrase (“Righteous King”) within the sentence. It can be read in construct with the phrase that precedes it (על־דברתי), resulting in the more standard interpretation, “You are a priest forever in the likeness of the Righteous King,” or this phrase can be read vocatively as though the King is being addressed by the words of the Psalm, represented by the JPS Tanakh translation, “You are a priest forever by my decree, Righteous King.”¹⁰⁰ As a result of the latter

⁹⁸ Gard Granerød posits that this text has been influenced by the others discussed in this section. For more, see *Abraham and Melchizedek: Scribal Activity of Second Temple Times in Genesis 14 and Psalm 110*, BZAW 406 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010).

⁹⁹ Hereafter when allowing for either interpretive option, “Righteous King” (note the capitalization) will be used.

¹⁰⁰ Jewish Publication Society, ed., *JPS Tanakh: The Jewish Bible*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1999). Granerød among others recommend that this phrase be translated “because of me” or “for my sake.” For an extended discussion of the wide range of grammatical options, see *Abraham and Melchizedek*, 196–205.

reading, not just the words of 110.4, but all of the second person language within the psalm is addressed to this figure, and similarly, the King is also the “lord” (אדני) to whom YHWH speaks in 110.1. While even within Greek traditions of this psalm (enumerated 109) the vocative reading remains grammatically possible, this interpretation of the LXX is unattested (to my knowledge), perhaps due to the translation of על־דברתי as κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ, as well as the messianic/christological interpretations of 110.1. Although far fewer proponents of this line of interpretation are present today, some suggest that the interest in Melchizedek in intertestamental literature can be traced to this reading. To grasp the significance of YHWH speaking to Melchizedek in this psalm, let us read the relevant portions of Psalm 110 again with this interpretation in place:

- 1 Sit at my right hand
until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.
- 2 The Lord shall send out the staff of your might from Zion;
you shall rule in the midst of your enemies.
- 3 Your people offer themselves willingly,
on the day you lead your forces on the holy mountains.
From the womb of the morning, your dew will come to you.
- 4 The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind,
“You are a priest forever according to my words, Melchizedek.”

To summarize, this text presents Melchizedek sitting at the right hand of the Father, presumably in judgment (110.1), ruling over his enemies (110.2), and serving as a priest forever in accordance with YHWH’s decree (110.4).

The Qumran Library

Both canonical texts from the Greek tradition about Melchizedek explicitly appear in Hebrews 7. As mentioned above, Hebrews 7.1–2 draws upon Genesis 14.18–20, and of course, the author quotes Psalm 110.4 in 7.17 and 7.21. Up until the evaluation of some of the pertinent texts from Qumran, the argument of Hebrews 7

was thought to be derived solely from the details of these two sources. Previously, those details that went beyond the explicit claims of the base texts were posited to be arguments from silence (more specifically, the Rabbinic principle, *quod non in thora non in mundo*).¹⁰¹ The author's presentation of Melchizedek in Hebrews 7.3 is the premier example: "Without father, mother, or genealogy, having neither a beginning of days nor an end of life, as one resembling the Son of God, he remains a priest forever." These striking characteristics noted by the author suggest that Melchizedek is *not* a purely human figure and may instead be divine, perhaps even an angel. Support for this view is found in the Qumran library, though in these texts, just as in Psalm 110, the reference may be to the individual named Melchizedek or to another righteous king.¹⁰² In Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice, the Righteous King serves as a priest in the "assembly" or "council" of God (4Q401 11.1.1–2). In 4Q Visions of Amram^b ar, the King, if the reconstruction in consensus is accurate, is placed in parallel with Michael the archangel (4Q544 3.4.2–3). This grouping of judgment, leadership, and priesthood all appears within Psalm 110, quoted above. While we find no quotations or even strong allusions in the extant portions of these texts, the collocation of ideas suggests it has indeed influenced their authors.

¹⁰¹ Fred L. Horton, Jr. advocates for this position even after an evaluation of the Qumran library (*The Melchizedek Tradition: A Critical Examination of the Sources to the Fifth Century AD and in the Epistle to the Hebrews* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976], 157). Joseph A. Fitzmyer likewise contends that Melchizedek's lack of genealogy is based on the silence of Genesis 14 ("'Now This Melchizedek' (Heb 7:1)," *CBQ* 25.3 [1963]: 316–17; see also "Further Light on Melchizedek from Qumran Cave 11," *JBL* 86.1 [1967]: 25–41).

¹⁰² Here מלכי צדק appears as two words, and as is typical of the Qumran literature, not even a *maqeph* (◌) appears. For an excellent discussion and evaluation of these texts and more Second Temple literature pertinent to Hebrews, see Eric F. Mason, "You Are a Priest Forever": *Second Temple Jewish Messianism and the Priestly Christology of the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Leiden: Brill, 2008); Eric F. Mason, "Hebrews 7:3 and the Relationship Between Melchizedek and Jesus," *BR* 50 (2005): 41–62.

A final text from Qumran that features this figure is of course 11QMelchizedek,¹⁰³ which presents “a heavenly figure bringing eschatological judgment.”¹⁰⁴ While Melchizedek is not explicitly called a priest, this text features a familiar exegetical method. In the extant portions, we see Melchizedek identified as the subject of several scriptural passages. To accomplish this, the author utilizes ambiguity in terminology that refers to God and heavenly beings. So whereas the MT interchangeably refers to YHWH with אֱל and אֱלֹהִים, the author of 11QMelchizedek appears to differentiate between the two forms. When referring to YHWH, he prefers to use אֱל, even where the MT reads יְהוָה or אֱלֹהִים, but he prefers to use אֱלֹהִים when referring to Melchizedek.¹⁰⁵ With this lexical preference in mind, interpreters can differentiate between the author’s references to God and to Melchizedek and see his method of identifying Melchizedek within his base texts more clearly. One likely place where this occurs is the reading of Psalm 82.1 in 11QMelchizedek 2.10:

it is time for the year of grace of Melchizedek, and of his armies—the nations of the holy ones of God—of the rule of judgment, as is written about him in the songs of David that say: “God [אֱלֹהִים] will stand in the assembly of God [אֱל].” [Psalm 82.1]

Grammatically, the reference to the one spoken about by David is almost certainly Melchizedek, suggesting that this author envisions him as the Elohim in the counsel of El. This interpretation is thus also a parallel for those texts discussed above that signaled prosopological exegesis due to the presence of two lords (κύριοι) interacting (e.g., Ψ 109.1). Another reading later in the text is pertinent, though more conjectural:

¹⁰³ Since this text is typically read as though מלכי צדק is a proper name, I will opt in this discussion to refer to this figure as Melchizedek, despite the ambiguity within the MT itself.

¹⁰⁴ Mason, “*You Are a Priest Forever*,” 200.

¹⁰⁵ For Mason’s useful discussion of each use of these terms, see Mason, “*You Are a Priest Forever*,” 177–83.

[...] in the judgment[s of] God [אל], as is written about him: “Saying to Zion, your God [אלוהיך] reigns.” “Zion” is [the congregation of all the sons of justice, those] who establish the covenant, those who avoid walking [on the pa]th of the people. And “your God” is [...Melchizedek, who will fr]e[e them from the ha]nd of Belial... (11QMelch 2.23–25)

In addition to the support of this reconstruction from Qumran scholars,¹⁰⁶ we likewise find support for Melchizedek as the one who frees the captives from Belial in line 13: “Righteous King will carry out the vengeance of Go[d’s] judgments, [and on that day he will fr]e[e them from the hand of] Belial and from the hand of all the sp[irits of his lot.]” The parallels at least in part confirm the reading above where the author identifies Melchizedek as אלוהים and the community as Zion. Thus, within 11QMelchizedek, we see something akin to the prosopological reading strategy utilized throughout Hebrews, as well as the elevation of the priest-king Melchizedek to one counted among the אלוהים. These texts offer a glimpse of the approbation of Melchizedek within Second Temple literature, a glimpse that makes his appearance in Hebrews somewhat less surprising, though the author of Hebrews draws upon this figure in a distinctly Christian way.

Melchizedek in Hebrews

Returning to the text of Hebrews, we now must consider to what extent the traditions represented in these texts may have influenced the author of Hebrews. This raises a number of relevant questions, such as: Is this prosopological reading of Greek Psalm 109.4 a Christian response to the Jewish traditions that address this psalm to Melchizedek? Does the author of Hebrews count Melchizedek among the angels? What is the relationship between Melchizedek and Christ? Pertaining to the

¹⁰⁶ Florentino García Martínez, Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, and A. S. van der Woude, eds., *Manuscripts from Qumran Cave 11 (11Q2–18, 11Q20–31)*, DJD 23 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), 229–30; Mason, “*You Are a Priest Forever*,” 180–82.

first question we have very little evidence, but the fact that Jesus associates this text with a reading about the “Son of David” rather than the Righteous King in the Synoptic Gospels suggests that viewing Melchizedek as a participant in this dialogue was less common by the first century (Mark 12.35–37; Matt 22.41–45; Luke 20.41–44).¹⁰⁷ The next two questions about Melchizedek in Hebrews are related. If Hebrews presents Melchizedek as an angel, then the author’s discussion of Jesus’ superiority to the angels in Hebrews 1 applies here also. But an angelic Melchizedek presents a number of problems for the author’s program. If Melchizedek is an angel, then he is a servant of humanity (1.14), those who are only temporarily “lower than the angels” (2.9). How then can Melchizedek’s priesthood be superior to the priesthood of the human high priests? The author leaves this potential objection to his argument unanswered. Further, the author does not classify Melchizedek as an angel or a god or even as a human, and so the question of “what” Melchizedek is remains.

Still some features of the author’s discussion do point at the very least to a non-human Melchizedek. For example, as we have seen, his lack of parentage does point toward a heavenly figure, and though we do not know to what the author is referring, the testimony that Melchizedek “lives” affords him mythical status (7.8: μαρτυρούμενος ὅτι ζῇ). Jerome H. Neyrey has even suggested that the author describes Melchizedek with *topoi* characteristic of Greco-Roman deities in order to depict him as a “true god.” True deities, per Neyrey’s reading of Greco-Roman literature, are: “ungenerated” (ἀγέννητος); “eternal in the past; imperishable in the future”; and “eternal” (ἄδιος) or “always existing” (ἀεί ὄν). In the same way, in

¹⁰⁷ It is possible that reading this as an address to the “Righteous King,” and not the individual Melchizedek, is compatible with the “Son of David” tradition.

Hebrews Melchizedek “remains forever”; is “without father or mother or genealogy”; and is “without beginning...or ending.”¹⁰⁸ Rather than limiting his inquiry to Melchizedek, Neyrey also extends this claim to Jesus:

Whatever the author says of Melchizedek must be understood as stated in service of Jesus. The assertions about complete eternity in Heb 7.3 are made apropos of Jesus in the rhetorically significant places of the document, its beginning [Heb 1.10–12] and end [Heb 13.8].¹⁰⁹

Unfortunately, Neyrey overstates his case for both figures. One easily identified issue is the fact that Jesus *does* have a genealogy (7.14) and a Father (albeit divine; 1.5).¹¹⁰ If these particular characteristics were essential to divinity for the author of Hebrews (for either character), then they would presumably not contradict those that he presents elsewhere.¹¹¹ Rather than being *without* a genealogy, Christ’s descent from the line of Judah is “well-known” or “clear” (7.14: *πρόδηλος*). But since Melchizedek’s priesthood cannot be on the basis of genealogy—for now obvious reasons—the author substantiates the new priesthood in a new way: “on the basis of the power of an indestructible life” (7.16: *κατὰ δύναμιν ζωῆς ἀκαταλύτου*). Thus the mismatch between the two origin stories is essential for his claim. If both were without genealogy, then one might argue this common factor was the basis for their priesthood. Instead, the new priest must be qualified on the basis of an “indestructible life” because (*γάρ*), the author says, it is testified: “You are a priest forever in the likeness of Melchizedek” (7.17). He seems to direct his readers to the

¹⁰⁸ Jerome H. Neyrey, “‘Without Beginning of Days or End of Life’ (Hebrews 7:3): Topos for a True Deity,” *CBQ* 53.3 (1991): 454. The characteristics of Melchizedek are Neyrey’s translations also.

¹⁰⁹ Neyrey, “Topos for a True Deity,” 455.

¹¹⁰ Moore, *Repetition in Hebrews*, 162–63.

¹¹¹ Despite her focus on the role of familial language in Hebrews, Peeler commends Neyrey, concluding: “By highlighting the importance of genealogy in the Melchizedek discussions, I reinforce this argument. The author utilizes the story of Melchizedek to point to the divine nature of Jesus by using it to highlight Jesus’ status as God’s Son” (*You Are My Son*, 187).

adverbial phrase εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα (“forever”) in order to establish the “indestructibility” of Christ’s life; however, translating this phrase adjectivally, stating that Christ is a *perpetual* priest, may offer more clarity.

Further, εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα cannot be applied to the other human high priests “because death prevented them from continuing” (7.23: διὰ τὸ θανάτῳ κωλύεσθαι παραμένειν). Whereas the author began with an extended discussion of how Jesus was like these human priests, he ends with this discussion of how they are unlike him:

For such a high priest [as Jesus] is fitting for us since he has been separated from sinners and has been exalted over the heavens, who has no need each day, like the [other] high priests, first to offer sacrifices on behalf of his own sins and then on behalf of the people’s. For he has done this once-for-all when offering himself. For the Law appoints human high priests, who have weakness, but the oath, which was after the Law, appoints forever the Son who has been perfected. (Heb 7.23–28)

These Levitical priests are implicitly then the “non-addressees” of the author’s oath to the Son. Toward the end of Hebrews 7, the fact that Christ became a high priest on the basis of an oath is substantiated with new material from Psalm 109 that the author has not quoted to this point:

For indeed when those others became priests it was without an oath, but [Christ became priest] with an oath by the one who said to him:

“The Lord swore and will not change his mind:
‘You are a priest forever.’” (Heb 7.20–21)

Here the author explicitly claims that the oath is evidence of further superiority for the priesthood of Melchizedek, but implicitly, readers would likely recall his recent discussion of how God’s oaths are “unchanging” (6.17: ἀμετάθετος). Lest anyone think that this priesthood too will be replaced by something superior, God confirmed this priesthood with an oath. The priesthood and the promise now fulfilled or being

fulfilled will endure for two reasons: (1) They are confirmed with an oath, and (2) their guarantor, Jesus, “remains forever” (7.24).

We now come to the question of how Melchizedek relates to Jesus. In the history of interpretation, Hebrews’ Melchizedek has been identified as a type of Christ¹¹² and even as Christ himself,¹¹³ but these options do not fully take the author’s language into account. Within Hebrews 7, two statements describe the relationship between these two priests:

Hebrews 7.3

Without father, mother, or genealogy,
having neither a beginning of days nor an
end of life, as one resembling the Son of
God, he remains a priest forever.

ἀπάτωρ ἀμήτωρ ἀγενεαλόγητος,
μήτε ἀρχὴν ἡμερῶν μήτε ζωῆς τέλος
ἔχων, ἀφωμοιωμένος δὲ τῷ υἱῷ τοῦ
θεοῦ, μένει ἱερεὺς εἰς τὸ διηνεκές.

Hebrews 7.15

And this is even more clear if another
priest arises in the likeness of
Melchizedek...

καὶ περισσότερον ἔτι κατάδηλόν
ἐστίν, εἰ κατὰ τὴν ὁμοιότητα
Μελχισέδεκ ἀνίσταται ἱερεὺς
ἕτερος...

Hebrews 7.15 is also thought to be the author’s restatement of Psalm 109.4, particularly since κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισεδεκ can be translated in much the same way.¹¹⁴ English translations tend to translate τάξις as “order,” due largely to the fact that the two “priesthoods” or “priestly orders” are being contrasted; however, an

¹¹² Koester, *Hebrews*, 352–62. Koester translates τάξις in the psalm as “type” throughout, but does not offer a further explanation of what this entails.

¹¹³ “[T]he identification of Christ with Melchisedech is definitely implied here [in Hebrews 7.8], because our author applies to Christ the only passage in the OT where the eternal priesthood is referred to, Psalm 110...the author of Hebrews actually identifies Melchisedech with Christ” (Anthony T. Hanson, *Jesus Christ in the Old Testament* [London: SPCK, 1965], 70–71).

¹¹⁴ Attridge, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 202; Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 378; Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 183; Koester, *Hebrews*, 355; James W. Thompson, *Hebrews*, Paideia (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 156; Weiß, *Der Brief an die Hebräer*, 398–99.

“order” implies continuity—a succession—but Jesus does not succeed

Melchizedek.¹¹⁵

Melchizedek and Jesus are the two priests appointed apart from the Law, and since the author says nothing about Melchizedek’s priestly ministry, we can determine that, in his case, the priest is far more important than the priesthood. This paired with Hebrews 7.15 suggests that τάξις should be glossed “arrangement, nature, manner, condition, outward aspect.”¹¹⁶ In other words, Jesus is a priest forever just like Melchizedek. But how then does Melchizedek “resemble” (ἁφομοιωμένος) the Son of God (Heb 7.3)?

This lexical form (ἁφομοιόω) has a broad range of glosses, likely due to a diachronic shift in meaning. Prior to the first century, it was defined negatively: “to be unlike”; however, over time the word was used to describe that which was “made like” something else. But the negative definition of ἁφομοιόω does not appear to be in use in the first century. Even within the LXX, we see one of its cognate nouns (αφόμοιος) used to denote a “copy” of a document (Sirach Prologue 29).¹¹⁷ Likewise the verbal form could be used for comparisons or even paintings.¹¹⁸ Therefore, perhaps much like τύπος, ὑποδεῖγμα, and a range of other terms, ἁφομοιόω is yet another word that the author uses to demonstrate connections between past and

¹¹⁵ Luke 1.8 also uses τάξις in a sacerdotal context: “Once when [Zechariah] was serving as priest before God and his section was on duty...” (NRSV; ἐγένετο δὲ ἐν τῷ ἱερατεύειν αὐτὸν ἐν τῇ τάξει τῆς ἑφημερίας αὐτοῦ ἐναντὶ τοῦ θεοῦ). A succession is indeed implied here, but due to the lexeme ἑφημερία. A more suitable translation that accounts for the full phrase in question (ἐν τῇ τάξει τῆς ἑφημερίας αὐτοῦ) might be: “in the manner of his division” or “by the proper procedure of his division.”

¹¹⁶ This range of glosses is put forward by *BDAG* as the most suitable for Hebrews’ quotations of Psalm 109.4 (p. 989).

¹¹⁷ Takamitsu Muraoka, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint* (Louvain: Peeters, 2009), 108. This is also the case for another cognate noun

¹¹⁸ H. G. Liddell, Robert Scott, and Henry Stuart Jones, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 9th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 292.

present or earthly and heavenly realities. This is well-summarized by Eric Mason's claim that:

the author of Hebrews was thinking of the relationship of Jesus and Melchizedek in terms akin to his conception of the sanctuaries, but with one further component. The eternal, divine Son was the model, and the angelic Melchizedek was the copy who encountered Abraham and established a non-Levitical priestly precedent in ancient Israel. This in turn prepared the way for the incarnate Son—both the model for Melchizedek yet now also resembling him—to be comprehended as priest.¹¹⁹

Indeed, Melchizedek sets a “precedent” for a priest whose genealogy is of no consequence. Nicholas Moore highlights an almost reciprocal dimension to the relationship between Christ and Melchizedek: “Psalm 110 is not so much reversed but extended backwards as well as forwards.”¹²⁰ He is high priest in the likeness of Melchizedek in that he has become a priest, not on the basis of genealogy, but on the basis of an indestructible life. He is a high priest who endures.

2.2.3. Summary

While Hebrews 1 focused primarily on the role of Christ as Son, Hebrews 5 and 7 focus on his role as high priest. This focus relies upon the author's prosopological readings of various texts that identify the Son as the addressee or subject of words previously attested in Scripture. Though the author turns to the Son's role as high priest, his priestly work is not yet outlined in detail in Hebrews; instead, the author describes his qualifications to be a high priest. This is largely defined in terms of the Son's relationships and the spheres to which he belongs. Just as in Hebrews 1, one important relational dimension is his role as the Son of God. The author refers back

¹¹⁹ Mason, “*You Are a Priest Forever*,” 202. Mason's quote and discussion is also highlighted by Moore, *Repetition in Hebrews*, 163.

¹²⁰ Moore, *Repetition in Hebrews*, 163.

to the point when the Father said to Christ, “You are my Son.” Another dimension that carries over from the previous chapters is the Son’s role as a human and his fraternal relationship with his siblings. As we shall see in the next chapter, when the Son responds to the Father, he speaks to him about his brothers and sisters—those who are also God’s children (2.11–13). A further implication of the Son’s humanity is it qualifies him to be high priest. As the author says, “every high priest, being taken from humanity, is appointed by God to serve on behalf of humanity” (5.1). Jesus shares in solidarity with all of humanity, but here the author identifies a subset of that population with whom he shares further: the priests. Jesus is in many ways like the other humans who precede him, but not in all ways. Jesus is not a Levitical priest, but one like Melchizedek. This too is confirmed by the Father, when he “swore”: “You are priest forever in the likeness of Melchizedek” (Heb 5.7; 7.17).

2.3. Hebrews 8.1–13: God Speaks of a New Covenant

In between the Father’s quotation of Psalm 109.4 and Greek Jeremiah 38.31–34, the author offers a comprehensive summary statement beginning at Hebrews 8.1:

But the main point [κεφάλαιον] of what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, who sits at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister in the sanctuary—the true tent—which the Lord has set up, not a human being. (8.1–2)

“Such a high priest” is the one described in Hebrews 7.26–28—one who is holy, blameless, set apart from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. He is one who has been made perfect forever. But he is also one taken from humanity to serve on their behalf (5.1) and one who has been made like his brothers and sisters in every way (2.17). This is the Son who sits at the right hand of the Majesty—the Father (1.1; 8.1)—who as such is exalted above the angels (1.5–14). We come now to the last of the Father’s speeches. The Father desires and promises a new covenant, one with a

superior mediator that is based on “better” promises (8.6). In the section that follows we will proceed through the text-form of the author’s quotation of Greek Jeremiah 38.31–34 analyzing the variations in form among its versions, discuss the content of the quotation and its contribution to the surrounding context (esp. Hebrews 8–10), and finally identify the participants in this quotation in light of the text-form and its new context.

2.3.1. Text-form of Quotation

Since a majority of the differences between the Hebrew and Greek traditions are relatively minor in these verses,¹²¹ we will begin with the differences between the quoted text in Greek Jeremiah and Hebrews:

Greek Jeremiah 38.31–34¹²²

31 Ἴδου ἡμέραι ἔρχονται, φησὶν κύριος, καὶ διαθήσομαι τῷ οἴκῳ Ἰσραὴλ καὶ τῷ οἴκῳ Ἰουδα διαθήκην καινὴν,

32 οὐ κατὰ τὴν διαθήκην, ἣν διεθέμην τοῖς πατράσιν αὐτῶν ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἐπιλαβομένου μου τῆς χειρὸς αὐτῶν ἐξαγαγεῖν αὐτοὺς ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου, ὅτι αὐτοὶ οὐκ ἐνέμειναν ἐν τῇ διαθήκῃ μου, καὶ ἐγὼ ἠμέλησα αὐτῶν, φησὶν κύριος·

33 ὅτι αὕτη ἡ διαθήκη, ἣν διαθήσομαι τῷ οἴκῳ Ἰσραὴλ μετὰ τὰς ἡμέρας ἐκεῖνας, φησὶν κύριος· Διδούς δώσω νόμους μου εἰς τὴν διάνοιαν αὐτῶν καὶ ἐπὶ καρδίας αὐτῶν γράψω αὐτούς, καὶ ἔσομαι αὐτοῖς εἰς θεόν, καὶ αὐτοὶ ἔσονται μοι εἰς λαόν,

Hebrews 8.8–12

8 ἰδοὺ ἡμέραι ἔρχονται, λέγει κύριος, καὶ συντελέσω ἐπὶ τὸν οἶκον Ἰσραὴλ καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν οἶκον Ἰουδα διαθήκην καινὴν,

9 οὐ κατὰ τὴν διαθήκην, ἣν ἐποίησα τοῖς πατράσιν αὐτῶν ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἐπιλαβομένου μου τῆς χειρὸς αὐτῶν ἐξαγαγεῖν αὐτοὺς ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου, ὅτι αὐτοὶ οὐκ ἐνέμειναν ἐν τῇ διαθήκῃ μου, κἀγὼ ἠμέλησα αὐτῶν, λέγει κύριος·

10 ὅτι αὕτη ἡ διαθήκη, ἣν διαθήσομαι τῷ οἴκῳ Ἰσραὴλ μετὰ τὰς ἡμέρας ἐκεῖνας, λέγει κύριος· διδούς νόμους μου εἰς τὴν διάνοιαν αὐτῶν καὶ ἐπὶ καρδίας αὐτῶν ἐπιγράψω αὐτούς, καὶ ἔσομαι αὐτοῖς εἰς θεόν, καὶ αὐτοὶ ἔσονται μοι εἰς λαόν

¹²¹ Only one difference is relatively significant to the interpretation of this text. Whereas the MT reads “I was a husband [or master] to them” (בַּעַלָם־לָהֶם), Greek traditions read “I did not care for them” (ἐγὼ ἠμέλησα αὐτῶν). The most plausible explanation is that the Greek translator misread יָלַעַל (“abhor”) for יָלַעַל. For a discussion of the other stylistic variations, see Gert J. Steyn, *A Quest for the Assumed LXX Vorlage of the Explicit Quotations in Hebrews*, FRLANT 235 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011), 253–56.

¹²² Joseph Ziegler, ed., *Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum Graecum*, vol. 15: Ieremias; Baruch; Threni; Epistula Ieremiae (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1957).

34 καὶ οὐ μὴ διδάξωσιν ἕκαστος τὸν πολίτην αὐτοῦ καὶ ἕκαστος τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ λέγων· γινῶθι τὸν κύριον, ὅτι πάντες εἰδήσουσιν με ἀπὸ μικροῦ αὐτῶν καὶ ἕως μεγάλου αὐτῶν,

ὅτι ἵλεως ἔσομαι ταῖς ἀδικίαις αὐτῶν καὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν οὐ μὴ μνησθῶ ἔτι.

11 καὶ οὐ μὴ διδάξωσιν ἕκαστος τὸν πολίτην αὐτοῦ καὶ ἕκαστος τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ λέγων· γινῶθι τὸν κύριον, ὅτι πάντες εἰδήσουσιν με ἀπὸ μικροῦ ἕως μεγάλου αὐτῶν,

12 ὅτι ἵλεως ἔσομαι ταῖς ἀδικίαις αὐτῶν, καὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν οὐ μὴ μνησθῶ ἔτι.

Represented by the underlined portions above, the textual variations from the LXX

in Hebrews are:

- (1) “Says” (φησὶν) reads “says” (λέγει) three times.
- (2) “I will ordain” (διαθήσομαι) reads “I will carry out or fulfill” (συντελέσω).
- (3) “With the house of Israel” (τῷ οἴκῳ Ἰσραὴλ) and “with the house of Judah” (τῷ οἴκῳ Ἰουδα) reads “with the house of Israel” (ἐπὶ τὸν οἶκον Ἰσραὴλ) and “with the house of Judah” (ἐπὶ τὸν οἶκον Ἰούδα).
- (4) “I ordained” (διεθέμην) reads “I made” (ἐποίησα).
- (5) “And I” (καὶ ἐγώ) reads “and I” (καὶ γώ).
- (6) “I will give” (δώσω) is not found in Hebrews.
- (7) “I will write” (γράψω) reads “I will write upon” (ἐπιγράψω).
- (8) “Among them” (αὐτῶν) is not found in Hebrews.

Due to the number of variations, those with little perceived significance to the interpretation of Jeremiah 38 in Hebrews (1, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8) will not be discussed here.¹²³ This leaves us with the following readings found in Hebrews: συντελέσω for διαθήσομαι and ἐποίησα for διεθέμην.

¹²³ Variation (1), which reads λέγω for φημί, may be due to the author’s preference for λέγω when referring to God’s speech that has an enduring message. Evidence for this may be found in Hebrews 8.6: “Then [God] said [to Moses] (ὅρα γάρ φησιν): ‘You shall do everything according to the pattern shown to you on the mountain.’” But as the only occurrence of φημί, a definitive conclusion cannot be reached.

Evidence for these variations within extant manuscripts is sparse, which suggests that the author of Hebrews is their most likely source.¹²⁴ Each of these readings moves away from the term in Jeremiah 38.31–34 LXX—“to ordain or decree” (διατίθημι)—but in opposite directions. The first evinces a more specific term συντελέω. The most relevant sets of glosses offered by *BDAG* for this verb are “bring to an end, complete, finish, close” or “carry out, fulfill, accomplish.”¹²⁵ This lexeme also relates to the twenty-four other forms from the root τέλος in Hebrews—many of which serve to highlight the author’s theme of “perfection.”¹²⁶ Teasing out the relationship among these terms we might say that the “perfecter of faith” (12.2) is “perfected through sufferings” (2.12) so that the new covenant, when “brought to perfection” (8.8), can “perfect the conscience of the worshippers” (9.9). The second variation in the quotation of Jeremiah 38 evinces a more general term ποιέω. While it often can be translated simply as “do or make,” here the most relevant set of glosses may be “do, cause, bring about, accomplish, prepare.”¹²⁷ Thus simply at a lexical level, it seems that the author has in view the start of the “old” and the finish of the “new.” We will continue our discussion of these alterations in the next section bringing them into conversation with the content of the quotation as a whole.

2.3.2. The New (or Renewed) Covenant

“Behold the days are coming,” says the Lord,
 “And I will fulfill a new covenant
 with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah,
 not like the covenant that I made with their ancestors
 on the day when I took them by the hand...” (Heb 8.8–9)

¹²⁴ Συντελέσω is also found in Symmachus and the Syrohexapla. Ἐποίησα is also found in Marchalianus.

¹²⁵ Bauer et al., *BDAG*, 975.

¹²⁶ Attridge, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 227; Cockerill, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 368–69; deSilva, *Perseverance in Gratitude*, 285; Koester, *Hebrews*, 385–86.

¹²⁷ Bauer et al., *BDAG*, 839.

This translation of the quotation in Hebrews further illustrates the potential significance of the author's alterations. This reading may also mitigate the concerns of some that the use of this quotation in Hebrews *necessarily* leads to a negative construal of Judaism. This concern is well-represented by Walter Brueggemann's reading of Hebrews:

The use of this text in [Hebrews] provides a basis for a Christian preemption of the promise. This preemption, however, misreads and misinterprets the text. Thus we arrive at a profound tension between the OT text and the NT quotation, a tension reflective of a long history of Jewish-Christian competitive acrimony. The matter is not easily adjudicated, because the supersessionist case is given scriptural warrant in the book of Hebrews. My own inclination is to say that in our time and place the reading of Hebrews is a distorted reading...¹²⁸

Further, these concerns are not isolated to "Old Testament" scholars, such as Brueggemann, as even interpreters primarily concerned with the New Testament have levelled this critique against our text.¹²⁹ Among those concerned, the author's conclusion to the quotation is often cited:

In saying "new," he has declared the first "old," and what is made obsolete and growing old is near its disappearance. (8.13)

Here Hebrews draws upon the relative quality of the word "new" (καίνός), and while we might claim that the lexeme itself does not necessitate a comparison, it is certainly the case that the quotation, even in its original context, invites the comparison raised by the author. The prophecy in Jeremiah says this is a covenant that is "not like the one [God] made with their ancestors" (38.32). This suggests that this proclamation is a distinct moment in God's relationship with his people,

¹²⁸ *A Commentary on Jeremiah: Exile and Homecoming* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 294–95.

¹²⁹ For example, "Indeed, the typological strategy in the Letter to the Hebrews is relentlessly christological and relentlessly supersessionist" (Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989], 98). Hays later critiques his own reading as "superficial" ("Here We Have No Lasting City": New Covenantalism in Hebrews," in *Epistle to the Hebrews and Christian Theology* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009], 151), but it nevertheless shows that Hebrews can be read "supersessionistically."

whether continuity or discontinuity is to be emphasized. Hebrews understands this to be a break with the terms of the first, which is “near its disappearance” (8.13: ἐγγὺς ἀφανισμοῦ), but his quotation, even with the emendations discussed above, still describes a covenant with Israel and Judah (8.8)—a renewal of YHWH’s relationship even with those who “did not remain” (8.9: οὐκ ἐνέμειναν). The primary dissonance between these two covenants for the author of Hebrews is the mediator or guarantor—Jesus. The dissonance then is whether Scripture can (or should?) be christologically.¹³⁰

Given the length of this quotation, we may expect an extended discussion of its claims; after all, it is twice as long as the second longest quotation in Hebrews (Ψ 94.7–11). Nonetheless, the author comments directly on only one word in the immediate context: “new” (καινός). In the second quotation of Jeremiah 38 (10.16–17), the emphasis comes into explicit focus:

“I will put my laws in their hearts,
and I will write them on their minds.”
Then, he adds,
“Their sins and lawless deeds
I will remember no more.”¹³¹

While the internal nature of the new covenant must certainly underlie the author’s argument about its efficacy (see esp. 9.6–14), as we shall see, forgiveness appears more often throughout the discussion. Even as early as the initial quotation, we find likely hints of the author’s accent on forgiveness. At least the two variations between the LXX and the quotation of Jeremiah 38 noted above—the two

¹³⁰ Michael Theobald offers an interesting perspective on this question. See “Vom Text zum lebendigen Wort.”

¹³¹ In Hebrews 8.6, the author claims that the new covenant “is legislated” (νενομοθέτηται) on better promises than the old. These promises, according to Harold W. Attridge, are found in these verses testified by the Spirit (“The Uses of Antithesis in Hebrews 8–10,” *HTR* 79.1 [1986]: 6). While the internal nature of the new covenant must certainly underlie the author’s argument about its efficacy (see esp. 9.6–14), forgiveness appears more often throughout the discussion.

replacements of διατίθημι with forms of συντελέω and ποίεω—can likely be attributed to the author of Hebrews himself. One explanation for this supposedly “stylistic” change is the author’s (unintended?) assimilation to Jeremiah 41.8 and 41.18.¹³² But since the author typically seems to deviate from the LXX only when such a move is in his interest, a further examination of the content of this chapter is in order.

In Jeremiah 41, the prophet receives a word from YHWH after Zedekiah “completes” (συντελέω) a covenant with the people to declare their “release” (ἄφεσις) from slavery (41.8). Having mentioned the covenant with Jeremiah’s ancestors (41.13), YHWH then speaks of the covenant “made” (ἐποίησαν) before him that was broken. Thus within this passage we have a reference to a “recent” covenant that is “completed” (or “fulfilled”), as well as a previous covenant “made” with their ancestors that was broken. This seems to solidify the lexical link between the two texts, but if this passage is intentionally being brought into view by our author, then why? The content of Zedekiah’s covenant, intended to free Israelite slaves, may initially appear to be of no interest to our discussion; however, the word for “release” used throughout this passage (ἄφεσις) is primarily used in the New Testament to denote a “release” or “forgiveness” from sins. Perhaps this passage about a covenant of “release” has led the author of Hebrews to expand their release from slavery to their release from the bondage of sin.¹³³ This reading of the Jubilee texts is not without precedent. For example, in one of the passages discussed above,

¹³² Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 416; Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 209.

¹³³ Similar language is arguably found in Hebrews 2.14–15: “Therefore, since the children share blood and flesh, he also partakes of those things in like manner in order that through [his] death he might destroy the one who holds power over death—namely, the Devil—and release those who by fear of death throughout their lives were subject to slavery.” In Hebrews 2, however, no explicit link is made to sin.

11QMelchizedek, we see an eschatological reading of these texts where

Melchizedek offers more than a mere release of earthly debts:

“Every creditor shall release what he lent [to his neighbor. He shall not coerce his neighbor or his brother, for it has been proclaimed] a release for God” [Deut 15.2]. Its interpretation for the last days refers to the captives...from the inheritance of Melchizedek...And liberty will be proclaimed for them, *to free them from [the debt of] all their iniquities.* (11QMelch 2.3, 5, 6)

This more eschatological or spiritual reading of the Jubilee passages increases the likelihood that the author of Hebrews is utilizing Jeremiah 41 to emphasize the role of forgiveness in the efficacy of the new covenant. The author develops the theme of forgiveness throughout Hebrews 8–10, for example, when he says that:

[Christ’s] death became a redemption [ἀπολύτρωσιν] of the transgressions committed during the first covenant... (9.15)

without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness [ἄφεσις] (9.22)

Where there is forgiveness [ἄφεσις] of [sins and lawless deeds], sacrifice for sins is no more. (10.18)

If sacrifice is the primary metaphor used by the author with regard to Christ’s atoning work, then these strong links between sacrifice and forgiveness are striking. To support this link, we could also include several quotations from Hebrews 9–10 that address the sin offering that Christ gave “once-for-all” on behalf of humanity (e.g., 9.28) or the “cleansing of the conscience” that removes guilt (e.g., 10.2) among other things, but these examples suffice to show that the remission of sins and their corresponding guilt is of the utmost importance in these chapters.

So then what does this focus on forgiveness communicate about the “newness” of the covenant? Discussions of Jeremiah 31 (38 LXX), even in its original context, are often interested in determining the level of “continuity” between this covenant and the one prior. Those advocating for a high level of continuity prefer to call Jeremiah’s covenant “re-newed,” a recommitment between YHWH and his

people, whereas those wanting to emphasize a higher level of discontinuity prefer to call the covenant “new.” On the side of continuity, we see the same actors within the proclamation of the covenant in Jeremiah (YHWH; Israel and Judah) as well as some of the same terms. For example, despite claims to the contrary, the Law was not merely written on tablets of stone, but was also meant to be internalized within the old covenant. Even within the Shema, we read:

Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all of your heart and all of your soul and all of your might, and these words that I command to you today shall be on your hearts. (Deut 6.4–6)

Similarly, God promises forgiveness within the old covenant (e.g., Exod 34.6–7), which also lends plausibility to claims of continuity. Nonetheless, Hebrews tells us that the sacrifices of the first covenant had to be repeated because the sins of the people too were repeated. The people of the old covenant were commanded to keep the Law upon their hearts (Deut 6.4–6), but their hearts were not yet “sprinkled clean” (10.22) because the “blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer” is “for the cleansing of the physical body” (9.13). The new covenant is written *by God* on their hearts and is put *by God* on their minds. It is wholly effective.

2.3.3. Covenant Participants

Of all the quotations that this study will address, this long citation of Jeremiah 38.31–34—the longest in the New Testament—offers fewer clues than any other about the participants involved. The speaker *and* addressees are disputed. Our task then is to perform our own modern form of prosopological exegesis—we must identify the characters within the author of Hebrews’ discourse. Beginning first with the speaker, the Father, Son, and Spirit are all viable agents. Let us begin first with the Spirit, who is identified as the speaker of a truncated version of this quotation

later in Hebrews 10.16–17. But, on the contrary, the most proximate general reference to the Spirit occurs in Hebrews 6.4, and the most proximate reference to his speech is in 4.7 (see §4.1.1 below). This distance between references, along with the lack of other signals, makes it unlikely that he is the speaking agent here.

Second, the Son, or “mediator” (μεσίτης), is the most proximate participant in view, but he is a relatively passive participant in this section.¹³⁴ Apart from sitting (8.1), and being appointed like the other high priests to offer gifts (8.3), he “receives” or “gains” (τέτυχεν) the ministry of which he is a mediator (8.6).

This level of agency certainly does not exclude him from speaking the words of Jeremiah 38.31–34, but it does raise enough doubt for us to move to evaluating the next alternative. Therefore, third, the speaker may be the Father. Returning to those actions just mentioned, we find that the Father is the active *agent* who enables the more passive *participant*, Jesus. Jesus serves in a sanctuary “set up” (ἔπηξεν) by YHWH (Heb 8.2), and when Jesus is “appointed” and “gains” his priestly ministry, who implicitly appoints and gives? The answer is certainly: the Father. If the Father is the one acting, then he is also likely the one who seeks a place for a second covenant (8.7: οὐκ ἂν δευτέρως ἐζητεῖτο τόπος). This makes him the most likely to speak to the people and proclaim the covenant’s future advent (8.8).¹³⁵ This identification is supported by the three occurrences of λέγει κύριος. Κύριος can certainly refer to the Son and Spirit in Hebrews, but within a quotation from Scripture the Father is likely in view.

¹³⁴ Pamela Eisenbaum argues that the Son is speaker (*The Jewish Heroes of Christian History: Hebrews 11 in Literary Context* [Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1997], 110–11).

¹³⁵ Attridge, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 227; Cockerill, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 366; Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 415; Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 209; Koester, *Hebrews*, 385; Spicq, *L’Épître aux Hébreux*, 2.240.

Another set of queries relates to the addressees, namely: Is this speech addressed to someone? And if so, to whom? The first question hinges in part on textual variant in this verse. Some manuscripts read αὐτούς (e.g., \aleph^* A D* I K P Ψ),¹³⁶ while others read αὐτοῖς (e.g., P⁴⁶ \aleph^2 B D² L).¹³⁷ If the pronoun is the object of the lexeme μέμφομαι, then either option is grammatically suitable. The noun is found with the dative more frequently in biblical literature, but is found more often with the accusative elsewhere.¹³⁸ Thus if the pronoun is read with the participle, the variant does not affect the meaning of the verb, nor its interpretation;¹³⁹ however, if the dative is the preferred reading, then this also allows the pronoun, which sits directly between the two verbs, to be taken as the indirect object of λέγει. William L. Lane, the primary proponent of this interpretation, contends that reading αὐτοῖς as a masculine pronoun with the participle μεμφομένος is logically inconsistent since the author takes issue with the Old Covenant and not those who adhere to it.¹⁴⁰ This is supported, he says, by the line just prior (8.7):

For if the first was blameless, then a place for the second would not be sought.

Εἰ γὰρ ἡ πρώτη ἐκείνη ἦν ἄμεμπτος, οὐκ ἂν δευτέρας ἐζητεῖτο τόπος.

As the protasis of this conditional implies, the first covenant was *not* blameless, and so surely the participle should be read as a reference to the first covenant. But since the pronoun is plural, and according to Lane, the dative reading is preferable, αὐτοῖς cannot refer to the first covenant. Thus it must be read as the indirect object of λέγει.

¹³⁶ This reading is preferred by Attridge, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 225; Cockerill, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 366; Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 415.

¹³⁷ This is preferred by Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 208–9. For a more thorough discussion of the evidence, see Johannes L. P. Wolmarans, “The Text and Translation of Hebrews 8:8,” *ZNW* 75 (1984): 139–44.

¹³⁸ Bauer et al., *BDAG*, 628.

¹³⁹ So Koester, *Hebrews*, 385.

¹⁴⁰ Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 202, 209.

This interpretation is again grammatically defensible, and it also adheres to the logical progression of the discourse in a way that faulting “the people” does not since the author’s critique is of the old order, and not of the people (yet). And still, Lane’s position, in addition to its minority status, has a number of minor problems that together render this reading less probable than the alternative. First and foremost, one of the more likely explanations for the variant reading in 8.8 (αὐτοῖς rather than αὐτοῦς) is the attempt to assimilate to the common construction λέγει with a dative indirect object.¹⁴¹ This paired with the preference for μέμφομαι with the dative in biblical literature makes αὐτοῦς the more difficult and thus more likely reading. Another factor is the lack of second person verbs and pronouns within the quotation. Readers of the quoted material have no signals that anyone particular is addressed by this text. For example, the ancestors are not “yours” as they were in Hebrews 3.9 or “ours” as they were in Hebrews 1.1, but instead “theirs” (8.9). The covenant is not with “you” or with “us,” but with the “house of Israel and Judah” (8.8). If the people are being addressed by this proclamation, then it is not in the same direct way that they are in Hebrews 3–4. Additionally, if the people are addressed by this proclamation, then it is exceptional among the Father’s speeches in the first two speech cycles of Hebrews.¹⁴² The Father primarily speaks to his Son.

Though these factors weigh against Lane’s reading, the problem of the author rather abruptly introducing God’s dissatisfaction “with the people” remains. In hopes of addressing this concern, let us return again to the preceding context—Hebrews 8.1–6. This section both serves to introduce the quotation of Jeremiah

¹⁴¹ So Attridge, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 225.

¹⁴² As we shall in §5, God (the Father?) speaks explicitly to the audience only once: “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you” (13.5), which seems to be a fitting culmination to the theme of divine speech.

38.31–34 and to recapitulate several key themes in the author’s argument to this point, such as the Christ’s session at God’s right hand (cf. esp. 1.4) and the nature of his priesthood. Regarding the latter, let us remember that Hebrews 5–7 introduces Christ’s identity as a priest, but does not in fact introduce an extended discussion of his priestly work. He delays that until this very passage, which begins in precisely the same way as Hebrews 5.2 (Πᾶς γὰρ ἀρχιερεύς...). This phrase points backward and also introduces another layer of his comparison:

For every high priest is appointed in order to offer gifts and sacrifices. So then, it is also necessary to have something that may be offered. Therefore, if he [Christ] was on earth, he would not be a priest because of those who were offering gifts according to the Law... But now he has gained a more excellent ministry that is superior to the same extent that he is also mediator of a superior covenant, which has been legislated on better promises. (8.2–4, 6–7)¹⁴³

Within this passage, the critique is primarily not against the covenant alone, but against several of its components, and as it happens, the component referred to most often within this section is the priests. After 7.28, the author does not explicitly critique the men themselves or their office, but by presenting Jesus as a superior priest and mediator, he does bring their work into question. This work is in service of the first covenant, which is precisely why the author brings it into view. This transition allows him to show that their “blame” relates to their lack of a “blameless” covenant, while also introducing the featured quotation. It seems therefore that it is upon “finding fault with the *priests*” that God speaks (“Behold the days are coming...”). This reading is grammatically plausible and attends to the logic of the author’s argument in this section. This reading in part remains in line with the majority of interpreters, but nonetheless seeks to correct the common identification

¹⁴³ The influence of Koester’s translation of Hebrews 8.6 is reflected above (*Hebrews*, 374).

of the antecedent of the third person pronoun (αὐτούς/αὐτοῖς). Rather than the people, it is far more than likely that God is finding fault with the priests. Therefore, reading the pronoun with the participle, if the people, or even the priests, are not the addressees in mind for this speech by the Father, then its auditory recipients (in a manner of speaking) are unclear. This speech may be proclaimed to the whole inhabited realm (cf. 1.6), or perhaps only to the Son. No matter the extent of the scope of the recipients, as we shall see, Hebrews seems to present a single response; the Son says, “I have come to do your will” (10.7).

2.3.4. Summary

Hebrews 8–10 presents Christ as the high priest whose self-offering accomplishes an effective once-for-all cleansing of guilt and sin. Grounding most of his argument in Scripture, the author utilizes its authority again by presenting God the Father speaking Greek Jeremiah 38.31–34. Upon finding fault with the priests, as well as the covenant they represent, God promises that a day will come with a new covenant. This promise, given at some point in the past, speaks of the time when this second covenant will be fulfilled, not just inaugurated. Hebrews tells us the first covenant was “made obsolete” (or “old”; *πεπαλαίωκεν*) when the second was called “new” (*καινός*). But it has not yet disappeared (8.13). For the author of Hebrews, the “first covenant” was the first one made with the people, but it was made as a sign of what was to come. The priests, their ministry, and their sanctuary were a “blueprint” or a “copy” (*ὑπόδειγμα*) of that which really existed prior. Thus to accuse the author of “replacing” these parts of the covenant with their ancestors is to forget that they are representative of the “better” things above. Even so, for those addressed by Hebrews, the relationship between these covenants is dialectical; the practices and

elements involved in the first covenant are representative of their heavenly counterparts, but without these earthly implements, Christ's offering in the heavenly sanctuary would be incomprehensible.

2.4. Conclusion

Through his use of prosopological exegesis, the author of Hebrews presents a characteristic Father who cares for his children. First, he speaks to his Firstborn in Hebrews 1 and plies him with honorable titles not fit for any angel or purely human king. The author upends typical interpretations of the passages by inserting new "faces." By distancing the Son from the angels and any others who were previously thought to be addressed by these texts, the author demonstrates that he is extraordinary, in many ways beyond compare; however, the Son has companions (1.9). He is not like the angels, but he is like humanity. Hebrews 5 shows how the Son connects to the others within his profession—the priests. The Son's qualifications for priestly ministry are found within the combination of his sonship (Ps 2.7) and God's oath (Ps 109.4) along with the rest of his qualities outlined of the catena of Hebrews 1. Hebrews 7 compares Jesus to the enigmatic priest-king Melchizedek who appears without warning in Genesis 14. This character has an enduring priesthood not substantiated by genealogy. Drawing upon the silence of Scripture paired with other Jewish traditions, the author describes Jesus as one more like Melchizedek than any other in Jewish history—besides of course his Father. When the Father speaks his last major quotation in Hebrews 8.8–12, the author presents it without commentary. God will establish a new covenant. Each of these speeches develops the author's characterization of the Father, while simultaneously setting up the speech of the Son to follow. He confirms his solidarity with his

companions—those he calls siblings in Hebrews 2—and then accepts God’s new covenant mission in Hebrews 10. Let us turn now to his responses.

3. Intra-Divine Discourse (2): The Son Responds to the Father

When speech is the medium selected for communication, a speaker communicates with an addressee and typically awaits a response. In an ordinary conversation this happens almost instantly, but in Hebrews, the answer to the Father's speech does not immediately appear. Instead the Father speaks, and then the author comments in a way that summarizes his speech while also setting up the response to come. Another facet of this conversation is its familial quality. In Hebrews 1.5–14 the Father outlines the Son's titles and history, and he offers proof that he is exemplary among his peers. For those invited to "listen in,"¹ this sounds much like a modern parent encouraging a child, and for those who have not yet met the Son who is worthy of such acclamation, anticipation grows for the opportunity to hear the words of one so remarkable. After the author of Hebrews has his opportunity to add to the conversation, we hear the Son speak in Hebrews 2.12–13 by means of the author's use of prosopological exegesis, returning the affection of the Father through his faithful declarations amidst his siblings.

Later in Hebrews, the author adds to the picture of the Son by quoting the Father's "oath" to make him a priest forever (5.5–6; 7.17; 7.21). This announces the Son's cultic character, which leads to God's last speech (8.8–12). In it he introduces another dimension to the conversation. Here he does not address the Son directly,

¹ I was pleasantly surprised after the fact to learn that this language is also used by Markus Barth ("Old Testament in Hebrews," 62).

but instead promises to amend the unsatisfactory state of his relationship with the siblings. He desires something different, something *new*. Just prior to this presentation of God's new covenant speech, the author of Hebrews presents Jesus, the Son, as the mediator of a new covenant (8.6), but it is not until Hebrews 10.5–7 that we hear the Son's response where he accepts the Father's mission. He will help extend the new covenant to humanity.

This chapter will demonstrate how the Son's portion of this intra-divine discourse contributes to the argument of Hebrews. In the first cycle of discourse, his response to the Father's acclamation comes only after the author's extension of the familial motif to humanity through his reading of Psalm 8. Men and women (or "humanity," ἄνθρωπος) are "sons and daughters" (2.10: υἱοί) and "brothers and sisters" (2.11–12: ἀδελφοί), a fact that the Son himself confirms (2.12–13). The fact that Jesus is made like humanity in every way is essential for his high priestly ministry (2.17), a central theme in later chapters of Hebrews (esp. chs. 5–7). In the second cycle of discourse, which culminates in the discussion of the new covenant in Hebrews 8–10, the Father's first main speech speaks the words of Greek Jeremiah 38.31–34, then after explaining God's rationale for instituting this ineffective order, Jesus speaks the words of Psalm 39, presenting himself ready to do God's will. As with the previous chapter, I will begin my discussion of each portion of the intra-divine discourse by connecting the context to the speech itself. I will then consider each of the author's citations, both the text-form and context, in order to elucidate aspects of the author's use of the prosopological reading strategy. This will offer a foundation for the final section on each text where I will discuss the content of the speech itself and the resulting divine characterization.

3.1. Hebrews 2.1–18: Jesus and His Siblings

The first passage with which this chapter is concerned is Hebrews 2.10–18. While Hebrews 1.5–13 presents half of an intra-divine discourse—those citations in Hebrews 1 depict the Father’s speech to the Son—in Hebrews 2, we hear the Son speak back. In addition to the continuity created by this divine conversation, these two passages are intimately connected. After his claim that angels are sent on behalf of humanity (1.14), the author of Hebrews continues with a paraenetic section that bridges these two parts of his argument. With Hebrews 2.1–4, the author brings Hebrews 1 to a fitting close by making another comparison between the angels and Jesus, since they are the ones who communicate the two covenants to the people:

For if the word spoken through angels was valid and every transgression and disobedience received its just penalty, how are we to escape if we neglect so great a salvation? [One] first received to be spoken by the Lord was then confirmed to us by those who heard... (2.2–3)

In other words, the author says, if God took seriously the first covenant, communicated through angels, then this covenant, communicated by the Son, is of the greatest consequence, especially given the purpose of the Father’s speech in Hebrews 1 to establish his primacy. As we have seen, the author uses the comparison in that chapter to establish a divine hierarchy of sorts—one where the Son is at the top, and the angels somewhere below. While the relative status of these two groups has now been addressed, another group is left without a rank. Where does humanity fit? Hebrews 2 is often thought to answer this question, but the content of the answer it offers requires further reflection.

Most of the history of interpretation for Hebrews 2.5–10 can be summarized as a quest to find its dominant theological element.² Some, extending the author’s focus on the superiority of the Son over the angels from chapter 1 and seeing the more explicit introduction of his role as high priest, argue that this passage is predominantly christological,³ while others, noting the turn toward Christ’s humanity and his work on behalf of his brothers and sisters, argue this text is largely anthropological.⁴ Each side focuses its attention on the primary citation in this chapter—Psalm 8.5–7 (minus 8.7a) in Hebrews 2.6–8—as the key to unlocking the emphasis;⁵ however, since the citation itself offers no explicit clues, I will instead focus on the surrounding material (2.1–5, 9–10) to demonstrate the necessity for an anthropological emphasis in this text.

Returning to the paraenetic section that opens this chapter (2.1–4), it is necessary to note that another comparison between the Son and the angels, the mediators of the covenant, is just one feature of this passage. But this is not the only point of comparison between the two orders. The other point of comparison is the

² Most recent interpreters accept that this is not a question of which single element motivates this passage, but rather which of two elements (usually christology and anthropology) is the author’s primary motivation. For a more standard summary of the arguments for each side of this debate, see Easter, *Faith and the Faithfulness*, 37–45. See also Jared Compton, *Psalm 110 and the Logic of Hebrews*, LNTS 537 (New York: T&T Clark, 2015), 141–45.

³ For (almost) purely christological readings, see, e.g., Attridge, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 69–77; Peeler, *You Are My Son*, 66–76; Russell D. Quinn and George H. Guthrie, “A Discourse Analysis of the Use of Psalm 8:4–6 in Hebrews 2:5–9,” *JETS* 49 (2006): 235–46.

⁴ For (almost) purely anthropological readings, see Craig L. Blomberg, “‘But We See Jesus’: The Relationship between the Son of Man in Hebrews 2:6 and 2:9 and the Implications for English Translations,” in *A Cloud of Witnesses: The Theology of Hebrews in Its Ancient Contexts*, ed. Richard Bauckham et al., LNTS 387 (London: T&T Clark, 2008), 88–98; Cockerill, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 124–36.

⁵ Greek Psalm 8.7a is found in several manuscripts (e.g., ⲛ C D* P Ψ) and omitted in several others (e.g., P⁴⁶ B D K L). Since it is more likely that the text was corrected to include this portion of the psalm, it seems likely that the omission is to be preferred. Although mere speculation, the most likely reason for its omission is the fact that this verse cannot be applied to both Jesus and humanity (Friedrich Schröger, *Der Verfasser des Hebräerbriefes als Schriftausleger*, Biblische Untersuchungen 4 [Regensburg: F. Pustet, 1968], 82; followed by Attridge, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 69). *Contra* Compton who argues that this omission “highlights the parallelism” with Psalm 109.1 (*Psalm 110 and Hebrews*, 39); also *contra* Ellingworth who argues this portion of the text does not cohere with the author’s eschatologically-oriented reading (*Epistle to the Hebrews*, 148–49).

means by which the covenants are confirmed. In this covenant God testified to “us” by means of “signs, wonders, various miracles, and distributions of the Holy Spirit according to his will” (2.3–4).⁶ The message is superior because it was delivered by the Son himself *as well as* the fact that humanity witnessed it via these various miraculous experiences. This latter emphasis follows logically from the angels serving humanity (1.14), perhaps primarily through delivering their own message (2.2).

Following this list of God’s testimonies to Christ’s message, the author connects this paraenetic section to the citation of Psalm 8 that follows by returning to the strategy we saw in Hebrews 1 (§2.1). This time, the angels are not the “non-addressees” of God’s speech, but instead the “non-recipients” of dominion over the world to come (2.5). Nevertheless, in Hebrews 1, the actual addressee, the Son, is made clear in the opening verses, whereas in Hebrews 2, Jesus is not mentioned until verse 9. It is thus unclear whether Jesus remains the author’s primary focus or whether the author has turned to the ministry of Jesus and its beneficiaries. The passage offers both possibilities:

For if the word spoken through angels was valid and every transgression and disobedience received its just penalty, how are we to escape if we neglect so great a salvation? [One] first received to be spoken by the Lord was then confirmed to us by those who heard, while likewise God testified [συνεπιμαρτυροῦντος] to it by signs, wonders, various miracles, and distributions of the Holy Spirit according to his will.

For he does not subject the world to come, concerning which we have been speaking, to angels ...

Even so, this passage signals a clear shift in focus. Hebrews 1 is primarily about who the Son is; Hebrews 2 looks to what he does, with the turn from the Son’s

⁶ The confirmation of the prior covenant is not explicit; however, the author’s use of the phrase “signs and wonders” (σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα), which refers to God’s works (both positive and negative) over 25 times in the LXX, may imply that, while the first covenant had these two elements, the second has even more means of confirmation.

inimitability to his commonality with the other “sons and daughters” (2.10). This focus throughout the chapter, paired with the care said to be taken by God to communicate the new covenant in 2.1–4, allows for the possibility that the world to come is subjected, not to angels, but to humanity.

Just after the eschatologically-oriented statement in 2.5, the author introduces the psalm citation with the curious formula: “but somewhere someone has solemnly testified, saying...” (2.6). Some argue that this introduction shows that the author is simply not concerned with the human agent,⁷ while some others cite a parallel in Philo, often without commenting on the purpose of his use of the formula.⁸ But in the parallel text, *De ebrietate* 59–61,⁹ Philo explains that Sarah is exceptionally virtuous among women because she has “ceased to be feminine” (τὰ γυναικεῖα πάντ’ ἐκλιποῦσα), an offering of his interpretation of Genesis 18.11 LXX (ἐξέλιπεν δὲ Σαρρα γίνεσθαι τὰ γυναικεῖα). To bolster his reading, Philo offers another reason for Sarah’s rise to exceptional standing within her gender, which he finds in the so-called “sister-wife” episode of Genesis 20. When Abraham defends the fact that he claimed Sarah was his sister, rather than wife, to Pharaoh, he explains that he has told a half-truth because Sarah is his half-sister. In the MT, his explanation of their relationship is clear (20.12):

“Truly, she is my sister—daughter of my father, but she is not daughter of my mother” [בת־אבי הוא אך לא בת־אמי].

⁷ For those who hold this view, see Chapter 1, n. 49

⁸ Attridge, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 70–71; Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 147–48; Koester, *Hebrews*, 213–14. Cockerill notes the parallel, but argues that Hebrews, unlike Philo, uses this to keep from distracting readers from his conversation between the Father and Son (*Epistle to the Hebrews*, 127, n. 18).

⁹ To my knowledge, this is the only true parallel to the formula in Philo. Elsewhere Philo quotes “somewhere” in the Psalms (e.g., *Deus* 74). Likewise, a search of TLG for the combination of πού + τις + λέγω no additional data that would be useful for comparison.

However, Greek traditions read: καὶ γὰρ ἀληθῶς ἀδελφὴ μου ἐστὶν ἐκ πατρός, ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἐκ μητρός. When this text appears in its context, it is clear that the personal pronoun μου is intended to clarify the two prepositional phrases (“For indeed, she is truly my sister—from [my] father, but not from [my] mother”), but Philo desires that this text to be read in another way. He makes the bolder claim that Sarah had no mother at all.

This is a legitimate, albeit creative, reading of οὐκ ἐκ μητρός (likely intended by Philo to be read: “not from [a] mother”). A reading that seems more justifiable when removed from the context of the original account. To achieve the desired distance from the original setting, Philo introduces the citation, “For somewhere someone said...” (εἶπε γὰρ ποῦ τις), removing its connection to the episode as well as its speaker, Abraham. Like the parallel text in Hebrews, introduced by διημαρτύρατο δὲ ποῦ τις λέγων, this citation also serves as proof for a point in Philo’s argument. Rather than simply noting the parallel language, if this parallel is useful for Hebrews as so many claim, then its function in Philo’s argument should also be examined. In other words, if Philo used this formula with a specific purpose, then Hebrews may have as well. In Philo’s case, this formula serves to remove an element that distracts from his argument; similarly, for Hebrews it is possible that the author considered a reference to David or another nameless Psalmist to be too contextually-bound for the purpose of this citation.¹⁰ An anonymous human speaker could present either a predominantly christological or predominantly anthropological reading of Psalm 8, but for the latter it seems particularly fitting.

¹⁰ Elsewhere the human involved in writing or speaking Scripture is not omitted when it serves the author’s purpose (4.7; 9.20; 12.21). While these citations are not as integral to the argument as the citation of Psalm 8, this does suggest that the author senses a tension with whomever he may have identified as speaker.

This then leads to the citation of Psalm 8:

What is man [ἄνθρωπος] that you remember him;
the son of man [υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου] that you care for him?
You made him a little lower¹¹ than the angels;
you crowned him with glory and honor.
You subjected all things under his feet.¹²

Within the psalm, a significant issue for interpretation is whether ἄνθρωπος and υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου refer to humanity in general (embodied within an individual υἱός) or to Christ. Jesus can certainly act as the singular representative ἄνθρωπος, but it is important for the author's argument that the psalm apply to all of humanity. With an anthropological reading of this psalm, the "man" (hereafter "person"), the singular human representative, is also referred to as a "son" through synthetic parallelism. When the attributes of the representative person are applied to all people, all of humanity enjoys the benefit of being a son or a daughter.¹³ If this text is read in a purely christological sense, then the reference to humans as "sons and daughters" in Hebrews 2.10 appears suddenly. Instead, this verse is integrally connected to the psalm text. The act of "bringing many sons and daughters to glory" (2.10) is a summary of "crowning [them] with glory and honor" and "putting all things under [their] feet" (2.7–8).

A decision on the emphasis becomes particularly important in the explanation following the citation. Summarizing the author's reading from the more anthropological perspective:

For in subjecting all things to [humanity], nothing is left unsubjected to it. But now we do not yet see all things in subjection to [humanity],

¹¹ A temporal reading of βράχυ τι is certainly possible, but not necessary. For a summary of the arguments, see Compton, *Psalm 110 and Hebrews*, 45–51.

¹² The (unfortunate) need for representative masculine language is used in service of convention and to retain the christological undertone necessary for the author's reading.

¹³ The reading presented by David M. Moffitt is in many ways a more robust version of that which you see here, although, on a more minor note, unlike Moffitt I suspect the author's "double entendre" begins with υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου. See *Atonement and the Logic*, 120–29.

but we do see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels,
crowned with glory and honor through the suffering of death....

This reading brings the author's discussion of humanity's inheritance forward in the letter. In addition to its implicit presence in the discussion of rest in Hebrews 3.7–4.11 or the explicit mention of an “eternal inheritance” in 9.15, perhaps its most explicit appearance occurs in the author's later exhortation: “since we are to receive the unshakable kingdom [i.e., the world to come], let us be grateful...” (12.28: Διὸ βασιλείαν ἀσάλευτον παραλαμβάνοντες ἔχωμεν χάριν). But it is not just the case that they have not received their eschatological reward; they are also likely experiencing great physical turmoil.¹⁴ With a predominantly anthropological reading of Psalm 8, the tension between the present and coming ages is a tension born by humanity as a whole, but the author directs his readers' gaze toward Jesus to offer them hope. Even though all things are not subjected to them, Jesus is already crowned with glory and honor (2.9).¹⁵ This is the same logic that underlies the rest of the chapter: Jesus is their forerunner (2.10: ὁ ἀρχηγός), made like them in every way (κατὰ πάντα τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς ὁμοιωθῆναι), which enables him to become their “merciful and faithful high priest” (2.17). He, like them, is one of God's children, and since they claim the same lineage (2.11), they are also “brothers” (ἀδελφοί, hereafter “siblings” or “brothers and sisters”). Moreover, even though Jesus, the firstborn (1.6), is perfect and already crowned at the Father's right hand, he does not disparage his younger siblings.¹⁶ The author proves this through the Son's response to the Father.

¹⁴ On the persecution of this group, see the recent summary of literature and treatment by Bryan R. Dyer, *Suffering in the Face of Death: The Social Context of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, LNTS 568 (London: T&T Clark, 2017), ch. 2.

¹⁵ So also Compton, *Psalm 110 and Hebrews*, 51–52.

¹⁶ David M. Allen cogently notes that [with this verse] “Hebrews has overturned or rewritten the Deuteronomic norm; the heavenly sons no longer guard the weakened sons of Adam (as in Deut 32.8), since the latter now inhabit a (superior) heavenly assembly of their own (cf. 12.23)”

3.1.1. Hebrews 2.12: Jesus the Unashamed Brother

The Son's reply comes in three parts. To introduce Jesus' speech, the author ties the first to the argument that precedes it, saying:

the one who makes holy [ὁ ἁγιάζων] and the ones being made holy [οἱ ἁγιαζόμενοι] are all from one [ἐξ ἑνὸς πάντες].¹⁷ For this reason, he [the one who makes holy] is not ashamed to call them [the ones being made holy] brothers and sisters, saying,

“I will proclaim [ἀπαγγεῖλω] your name to my brothers and sisters;
In the midst of the assembly [ἐν μέσῳ ἐκκλησίας], I will sing
your praise.”¹⁸

Here Jesus speaks the text of Greek Psalm 21.23, which provides evidence that Jesus refers to the people as siblings, a point that the author can make only by utilizing prosopological exegesis. He must allow Jesus to speak for himself and give his authority to the claim. But unlike most of the prosopological readings that we have discussed thus far, the author quotes a portion of text that offers no clear rationale

(*Deuteronomy and Exhortation*, 108). David M. Moffitt, conversely, reads some continuity with Adam into this text, arguing that the “one” (ἐνός) source of the Son and his siblings is Adam (*Atonement and the Logic*, 130–38).

¹⁷ In addition to a number of ancient commentators, among those favoring this option are: Attridge, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 88–89; Bates, *The Birth of the Trinity*, 138; Cockerill, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 140–41; deSilva, *Perseverance in Gratitude*, 114; Koester, *Hebrews*, 230; Lane, *Hebrews* 1–8, 58; Peter T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 108–9; J. Ross Wagner, “Faithfulness and Fear, Stumbling and Salvation: Receptions of LXX Isaiah 8:11–18 in the New Testament,” in *The Word Leaps the Gap: Essays on Scripture and Theology in Honor of Richard B. Hays*, ed. J. Ross Wagner, C. Kavin Rowe, and A. Katherine Grieb (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 100.

¹⁸ The text-form of this citation is identical with the LXX apart from the verb in the first clause. In the LXX, the verb is διηγέσθαι (“tell, relate”). The reading attested in Hebrews has no parallel in extant manuscripts, which makes it more likely that the author has deliberately altered his text. Two (plausible) reasons for this alteration have been suggested: (1) the author sought to achieve assonance at the beginning of each line in 2.12–13 (ἀπαγγεῖλω...ἐν μέσῳ...ἐγὼ [another addition]...ἰδοὺ ἐγώ; see George H. Guthrie, “Hebrews,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007], 949); (2) the author preferred the Hebrew reading (רָצָה that is often translated with prefixed forms of ἀγγέλλω) and sought to align his citation with it. It is also possible that the author sought to bring this text into alignment with another text, such as Greek Psalm 101 or Isaiah 12. Both of these chapters are cited in Hebrews 1–2 (1.10–12 and 2.13, respectively), and both have a prefixed form of ἀγγέλλω with ὄνομα as the object. See below on the author's use of Isaiah 12.

for its prosopological reading and that has few parallel readings by other early Christian authors.¹⁹ Why has *this* text been read in *this* way?

To answer this question, we must examine the remainder of this psalm in its original context. In Psalm 21.1–18, the speaker cries out in agony, feeling that God has abandoned him in his grief to be physically and emotionally tormented by everyone he encounters. In 21.19–22, in the midst of his exasperation, he pleads with God to rescue him. Then, shifting to the future tense, he pledges to praise God when he is saved from his turmoil in 21.23–31. While the quotation in Hebrews comes from this last section (21.23), the first section of this psalm (21.1–18) is frequently cited in early Christian literature, and it is likely this portion that signaled the prosopological reading of this text in Hebrews.

The likelihood that the author knows the surrounding context of this citation is supported by the new context into which he inserts it. Just before and after the quotations, the author refers to the suffering and death of Jesus, even though none of the quotations refer to it explicitly. This interplay between the Psalm 21 citation and its context offers an example of the author’s multivalent use of Scripture.²⁰ With this text, the author makes a specific point from the selected text, but hints at his purpose for this section through its original context. He demonstrates that Jesus is willing to be counted among his brothers and sisters—among humanity—and also willing to be made like them through suffering. His “sharing” in humanity implicitly is presented in two stages. First, he becomes human, sharing “blood and flesh” (2.10); second, he is made like his siblings in “every way” (κατὰ πάντα, 2.17; cf. 4.15) so

¹⁹ Prior to 300 C.E., this reading is found only in Clement of Alexandria, *Protr.* 11, and Tertullian, *Marc.* 3.22.

²⁰ A number of commentators agree that the first portion of the psalm contributed to the author’s selection of this text: Cockerill, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 143; deSilva, *Perseverance in Gratitude*, 115–16; Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 167–68.

that he might be their “merciful and faithful high priest.” The logic in this section suggests that this latter phase is dependent upon his suffering and death. It is precisely his earthly pain, the author says, that qualified him for priestly service on behalf of humanity (2.17–18).

As previously mentioned, in early Christian literature, Psalm 21 often was cited as a text about Christ’s suffering, making the first half, particularly the first verse, of this psalm more recognizable to modern readers. In Mark and Matthew, Psalm 21.1 is uttered by the wearied Jesus on the cross. He cries out, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” And while this is the only quotation from this text spoken by Jesus in the Gospels, several events are characterized by allusions to this psalm, for instance:

All those who see me mock me; they insult me with their speech; they shake their heads. (21.8 LXX)	And those passing by insulted him, shaking their heads... (Mark 15.29; cf. Matt 27.39)
Hope in the Lord; let him rescue him. (21.9 LXX)	They said, “...He trusts in God, let him rescue him...” (Matt 27.43)
They distributed my garments among themselves; They cast lots for my clothes. (21.19 LXX)	This was in order that Scripture might be fulfilled: “They distributed my garments...” (John 19.24; cf. Matt 27.35; Mark 15.24; Luke 23.34)

The suffering Jesus is characterized as the one who faithfully awaited God’s rescue in Psalm 21. These allusions offer evidence that the gospel writers also read this psalm christologically, but since no aspect of these readings is found explicitly in Hebrews, it is unclear whether its author is drawing upon a well-established tradition or is laying the groundwork for something new.

In favor of his use of an established tradition is the fact that this is not the only example of the author using a familiar text in a creative way. Perhaps the best illustration of this is his use of Greek Psalm 109. Psalm 109.1, as we have seen, was

a popular Christian text. It appears in each of the Synoptic Gospels, Acts, Pauline literature, as well as Hebrews; however, the author of Hebrews quotes not only Psalm 109.1, the verse with an already established tradition, but also 109.4, which appears to be his own innovation. In fact, this latter text is the main text underlying Hebrews 5–7. It is as if the author of Hebrews became aware of Psalm 109.1 and then kept reading to see if this psalm afforded any other christological insights. In a similar way, the author may have encountered traditions about Jesus being the faithful sufferer in Psalm 21, and upon reading the original text, found that a later verse served his argument.²¹ His use of Psalm 21.23 allows him to oscillate between his discussion of the familial relationships among the Father, Son, and siblings as well as his discussion of Christ’s suffering as a human. Throughout this psalm, the speaker praises God despite his great pain, and he calls out for rescue. Hebrews makes clear that Jesus shares that rescue with his brothers and sisters, those to whom he is connected by flesh and blood. So while a number of citations could have been selected to recall Christ in the midst of suffering, this particular text serves the author’s argument because, in the midst of suffering, he lays claim to his brothers and sisters.²²

Returning briefly to the citation itself, a few other observations are necessary for this discussion. First, Jesus pledges to the Father that he will “proclaim his name” to the siblings. That is, he declares his ministry on their behalf. While Hebrews 2.10–18 focuses on Christ’s death, this citation highlights his revelatory ministry. Moreover, he is not one who performs his ministry at a distance; he will

²¹ This is also noted by Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 167.

²² *Contra* Compton who claims this text “[appears] to address an exalted Jesus” (*Psalms 110 and Hebrews*, 59; see also Cockerill, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 143; Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 167–68).

join them in worship. This gathering includes not only his proclamation, but also his song. Jesus, in the second line of this reported speech, says “in the midst of the assembly” he will “sing” (ὕμνέω), an action Jesus rarely performs in the New Testament. Elsewhere, in Mark 14.26 and the parallel passage in Matthew 26.30 (an exact replication), the gospel writers record that “After singing a hymn, they [the disciples and Jesus] departed for the Mount of Olives.” In Hebrews, and perhaps also in the Gospels, Jesus sings in a corporate setting (ἐν μέσῳ ἐκκλησίας).²³ While Jesus may well be the one leading the congregation in song, this is not explicit in the text. What is clear is that he sings this song of praise with his siblings in the assembly. Through this citation of Psalm 21.23 spoken by Jesus, the author of Hebrews portrays Jesus as the speaker, the one who, even when facing death, praises God in expectation of rescue.²⁴ He does not set himself apart from his brothers and sisters, but worships among them. With the next two citations, the author further develops Jesus as a model of faithfulness.

3.1.2. Hebrews 2.13: Jesus the Faithful Brother

After his citation of Psalm 21.23, the author inserts the citation formula καὶ πάντιν as a transition to the second of the citations that Jesus speaks. We first saw this formula in between the two citations in Hebrews 1.5 (Ps 2.7; 2 Sam 7.14). With this minimalistic transition, the author is able to achieve disjunction between the content of the texts while still maintaining the speaker, addressee, and setting of the new

²³ In general, the author exhibits an awareness of the Jesus tradition broadly (e.g., allusions to him being tempted, 2.14–18; suffering and prayers, 5.7–10), but never quotes or alludes to a specific passage from the canonical gospels. This association between singing and the passion event is, in my opinion, plausible, but by no means definitive. (For more, see Christopher A. Richardson, “The Passion: Reconsidering Hebrews 5.7–8,” in *A Cloud of Witnesses: The Theology of Hebrews in Its Ancient Contexts*, ed. Richard Bauckham et al., LNTS 387 [London: T&T Clark, 2008], 51–67).

²⁴ I will address the timing of this verse in more detail below.

context. In other words, he can continue to have Jesus speak to God while also developing his argument through what Jesus says to him. According to the author of Hebrews, Jesus says:

“I will proclaim [ἀπαγγελῶ] your name to my brothers and sisters;
In the midst of the assembly [ἐν μέσῳ ἐκκλησίας], I will sing
your praise.”

And again [καὶ πάλιν],

“I will put my trust in him.”

And again [καὶ πάλιν],

“Here I am, and the children whom God has given me.” (2.13)

As this portion of the text demonstrates, the καὶ πάλιν citation formula, the most common in Hebrews, actually occurs twice in Hebrews 2.13.²⁵ At first glance, this is unremarkable; the author cites three texts and decides for stylistic reasons to use a consistent introduction for the two transitions. But has the author cited three *separate* texts? The first and third of these citations are the most easily identified. The first is Greek Psalm 21.23, as we have discussed, and the third is clearly Greek Isaiah 8.18; however, the second could be one of three texts: 2 Kingdoms 22.3, Isaiah 12.2, or Isaiah 8.17. Greek traditions for all three are identical (πεποιθὼς ἔσομαι ἐπ’ αὐτῷ), though modified in Hebrews (ἐγὼ ἔσομαι πεποιθὼς ἐπ’ αὐτῷ), but since a clear citation of Isaiah 8.18 follows, most assume that this too is a quotation of Isaiah 8.

Nevertheless, if this is the intended citation, then why has the author split it in two? Some claim that the split citation allows the author to make “two distinct points,”²⁶ but he consistently advances more than one thought with his citations.

Instead, something more distinctive might be at work here. Matthew Bates has

²⁵ This formula occurs four times (1.5; 2.13 [x2]; 10.30). The author also introduces citations using καθὼς paired with a speaking verb four times (3.7; 4.3; 4.7; 5.6) but with quite a bit of variation among the occurrences.

²⁶ Attridge, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 90; see also Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 169; Wagner, “Faithfulness and Fear,” 99.

offered one proposal. He claims that these texts are spoken at different chronological points by Jesus after he encounters “intense hostility.” In between the two citations from Isaiah 8, the Son experiences rescue, and the children are then welcomed into the family of God (“implying Gentile inclusion”).²⁷ While this reading does account for the shift in tense from present to future between these two verses, it also requires a rather elaborate reconstruction, which is not without problems.²⁸ This is not likely the best explanation for the introductory formula and the split citation; however, it sheds light on another interpretive issue, so I will return to this proposal later.

Another possibility for the split citations is that the author was trying to allow for multiple references within the second citation. This is supported by the author’s fourth use of the καὶ πάλιν introductory formula. In Hebrews 10, he admonishes those in the community who continue to sin (10.26–30). After enumerating the many offenses of this disobedience (such as trampling the Son, profaning his blood, and outraging the Spirit), he reminds them of some prior warnings:

For we know him who said,
“Vengeance is mine; I will repay,”
and again [καὶ πάλιν],
“The Lord will judge his people.” (10.30)

The first citation, “Vengeance is mine...,” is likely a reference to Deuteronomy 32.35, but the second may have two references, Deuteronomy 32.36 and Greek Psalm 134.14, as the quoted portion matches both verbatim.²⁹ One could again argue

²⁷ Bates, *The Birth of the Trinity*, 145.

²⁸ Focusing just on Bates’ claim about the welcome of the children into the family, two problems emerge. First, Jesus has already called them “brothers and sisters” in 2.12, and the author’s use of Psalm 8 seems dependent upon an already existing familial link since they are “sons.” Second, the claim that this implies Gentile inclusion is too far afield. This author does not separate his community by ethnic designations, but by religious ones. It is not “Jew or Gentile,” but “faithful or unfaithful” (see Bates, *The Birth of the Trinity*, 137–46). For more, see Ellingworth who says, “total absence from Hebrews of any reference to the gentile mission” (see *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 175).

²⁹ *Contra*, e.g., Allen, *Deuteronomy and Exhortation*, 60–62.

that the author hopes to make two separate points with his otherwise relatively contiguous citations of Deuteronomy, but in this instance, since the text of the verse in Psalm 134 is identical to Deuteronomy 32 in content, it is difficult to determine what the specific point of each citation could be. Rather than making two points, perhaps the author is drawing upon two complementary contexts. Namely, on the one hand, this latter portion of Deuteronomy 32 has a harsh tone, threatening those who disobey and foolishly fall into idolatry; Psalm 134, on the other hand, has a more positive tone. The Lord will judge, but he also will be encouraged (παρακαλέω) with regard to his servants (134.14).³⁰ This is not a text about the harshness of God's justice, as in the Song of Moses, but a text about God's goodness or rightness. The latter complements the former, and while admittedly this dual reading is not essential to Hebrews, it works well, particularly considering the fact that this section (10.19–31) begins with encouragement and ends with admonishment.

Returning to Hebrews 2, the question is whether a reference to a text other than Isaiah 8 is likely and/or beneficial to the author. In favor of a reference to 2 Kingdoms 22.3 is the citation of Psalm 21.23 in 2.12, which is also traditionally associated with David.³¹ Moreover, the two texts have considerable thematic overlap since in both the speaker praises God for deliverance.³² Thematic overlap is also found between Psalm 21.23 and another possible text underlying 2.13a: Isaiah 12.2. In both texts, the speakers praise God's name, and in both, a number of the same lexical forms are found (e.g., ὑμνέω, ὄνομα, ἀναγγέλλω).³³ This evidence is

³⁰ James Swetnam argues that this quotation has a "positive" function also, but not on this basis ("Hebrews 10,30–31: A Suggestion," *Bib* 75.3 [1994]: 388–94).

³¹ Cockerill, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 143–44.

³² Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic*, 133.

³³ Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 169.

bolstered by the fact that the author's (potential) alterations of his base text actually bring this citation closer into alignment with Isaiah 12. In addition to the conceptual plausibility, all three of the possible texts are first person discourse and can be read using prosopological exegesis. In other words, all three texts fit the context and the reading strategy found in Hebrews 2.

This allows for the possibility that multiple texts are in view, as does the parallel use of the καὶ πάλιν introductory formula in 10.30 to separate two relatively contiguous texts.³⁴ In 2 Kingdoms 22.3, the speaker offers extended praise to God for his rescue, suggesting that he is faithfully devoted, and in Isaiah 12.2, he sings to God and thanks him for not acting upon his anger toward the speaker.³⁵ These texts might supplement the depiction of the human Jesus and by extension give further insight into this intra-divine discourse. Although even if these other texts are in view in Hebrews 2.12–13, Greek Isaiah 8.17–18 is the author's principal source for these last two citations, and the split citation could simply be a result of the author acknowledging some disjunction between the two verses; however, the fact that the two verses are easily read in isolation from one another supports either option.

One text underlying Hebrews 2.13a is certainly Isaiah 8.17. With this in mind, we turn now to an investigation of its text-form. This may appear to be a straightforward question since the version of Isaiah 8.17–18 quoted in Hebrews

³⁴ A brief lacuna is present between the two texts quoted from Deuteronomy 32, but the fact that the author boasts two of the three longest citations in the New Testament (3.7–11; 8.7–12) suggests that he has taken no issue with quoting extraneous material to preserve a citation. The Jeremiah 31 quotation in Hebrews 8 in particular primarily draws upon the beginning and end, but the author opts not to separate the citations and eliminate the material in the middle.

³⁵ While the latter might seem problematic if Christ refers to God's anger against him, Marie-Josèphe Rondeau's survey of early Christian literature (see §1) found that for the ancient exegetes using prosopological exegesis: "Ces Psaumes ne sont donc plus compris comme des lamentations individuelles, mais comme les lamentations de celui qui, assumant en lui nos souffrances, gémit pour nous... Le Christ lui-même est parfaitement innocent mais... il a pris sur lui les péchés du peuple." See *Les commentaires patristiques*, 2:394. Particularly in this section about Christ's humanity, this is plausible for Hebrews as well.

aligns with the LXX, apart from the addition of ἐγώ at its start;³⁶ however, Greek traditions of Isaiah 8.11–18 have several points of departure from Hebrew traditions.³⁷ Examining these differences elucidates the interpretation of this text at the time of its translation, which may offer insight into the reading in Hebrews.

13 κύριον αὐτὸν ἀγιάσατε, καὶ αὐτὸς ἔσται σου φόβος. 14 καὶ ἐὰν ἐπ’ αὐτῷ πεποιθῶς ᾦς, ἔσται σοι εἰς ἀγίασμα, καὶ οὐχ ὡς λίθου προσκόμματα συναντήσεσθε αὐτῷ οὐδὲ ὡς πέτρας πτώματι... 16 Τότε φανεροὶ ἔσονται οἱ σφραγιζόμενοι τὸν νόμον τοῦ μὴ μαθεῖν. 17 καὶ ἐρεῖ Μενῶ τὸν θεὸν τὸν ἀποστρέψαντα τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ οἴκου Ἰακωβ καὶ πεποιθῶς ἔσομαι ἐπ’ αὐτῷ. 18 ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ καὶ τὰ παιδιά, ἃ μοι ἔδωκεν ὁ θεός...

13 Revere him as Lord, and he will be your fear. 14 And if you trust in him, he will be a sanctuary for you, and you will meet him neither like a stone of stumbling nor like a rock of offense... 16 Then, those marked by a seal of the Law that they did not learn will be revealed. 17 And he will say, “I will wait for God who hides his face from the house of Jacob, and I will put my trust in him. 18 Here I am the children whom God has given to me...”

In the MT, the Prophet is warned not to emulate a group of opponents (8.11), whose errors are then summarized by YHWH (8.12). From 8.13–18, the Prophet speaks, warning the people about the judgment to come (8.13–15) and then professing his trust in YHWH (8.16–18). In the MT reading, Isaiah 8.14 offers a mixed message about the fate of the people. The Lord will not only be a “sanctuary,” but also a “stone of stumbling” and a “rock of offense.” The placement of accents within this verse in the MT offers distance between these two phrases,³⁸ but the ambiguity in their relationship remains.³⁹

³⁶ This serves the assonance mentioned previously. See n. 18 of this chapter.

³⁷ For a more general discussion of this section (8.11–16) and Greek Isaiah as a whole, see, e.g., A. van der Kooij, “The Septuagint of Isaiah and the Mode of Reading Prophecies in Early Judaism: Some Comments on LXX Isaiah 8–9,” in *Die Septuaginta: Texte, Kontexte, Lebenswelten*, ed. Martin Karrer and Wolfgang Kraus, WUNT 219 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 597–611; Ronald L. Troxel, *LXX-Isaiah as Translation and Interpretation: The Strategies of the Translator of the Septuagint of Isaiah*, JSJSup 124 (Leiden: Brill, 2008); J. Ross Wagner, “Identifying ‘Updated’ Prophecies in Old Greek (OG) Isaiah: Isaiah 8:11–16 as a Test Case,” *JBL* 126.2 (2007): 251–69.

³⁸ So J. Ross Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News: Isaiah and Paul in Concert in the Letter to the Romans*, NovTSup 101 (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 140.

³⁹ One solution for the MT is an emendation to the text that reads the root שקד as רשק, the latter of which appears in YHWH’s summary of the group’s flawed ideology (8.12). This reading then results in prophetic irony: What this group calls conspiracy (YHWH himself) will now become

Evidence that ancient readers also sensed a tension within this text is found in the LXX.⁴⁰ The hope of YHWH becoming a “sanctuary” (ἁγίασμα) for these opponents appeared problematic. How does this promise fit in the midst of this warning? Rather than altering the extant text, a protasis is added to make the promise into a conditional. To offer a cohesive reading, the new protasis borrows language from 8.17, namely a periphrastic construction with πείθω: “And if you trust in him [καὶ ἐὰν ἐπ’ αὐτῷ πεποιθῶς ᾦς], he will be a sanctuary for you...” This addition solves the tension with the first element in the phrase, but introduces another; if it remained in alignment with the attested Hebrew texts, YHWH would be a “stone of stumbling” and “rock of offense” for those who trust him. Almost certainly for this reason, the next difference found in Greek traditions negates the elements: “You [who trust in him] will meet him *neither* as a stone of stumbling *nor* as a rock of offense [οὐχ ὡς λίθου προσκόμματι συναντήσεσθε αὐτῷ οὐδὲ ὡς πέτρας πτώματι].”⁴¹ From the emended Hebrew to Greek traditions, readers may find anything from a stark warning to a gracious promise.

The next major difference between Hebrew and Greek traditions arises due to confusion about who is speaking, a familiar concern. As recounted above, Isaiah 8.13–18 is typically considered to be the Prophet’s speech in the MT, and the only words explicitly attributed to YHWH appear in 8.12; however, in Greek traditions, the Lord begins speaking as early as 8.11, but where he concludes and the Prophet

just that (8.13–14). In support of the emendation, see Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39*, AB 19 (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 241–42; John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 1–33*, Revised., WBC 24 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 155–58. Against the emendation, see Craig A. Evans, “An Interpretation of Isa 8:11–15 Unemended,” *ZAW* 97.1 (1985): 112–13.

⁴⁰ Although one cannot be certain, these alterations of Greek Isaiah are often attributed to the translators: “Additions to or modifications of the Hebrew parent text are likely in many cases, and this raises the possibility that the translator was conveying his own theological or political position in the translation” (see Abi T. Ngunga and Joachim Schaper, “Isaiah,” in *T&T Clark Companion to the Septuagint*, ed. James K. Aitken [London: T&T Clark, 2015], 457).

⁴¹ Another reason for this insertion is offered by Ronald L. Troxel, who argues this is due to the translator’s “aversion to translating צור as an epithet for the Kyrios” (*LXX-Isaiah*, 245).

begins again could occur at several points. In the NETS translation of the LXX, for example, YHWH speaks in 8.11–15,⁴² but in the Lexham English Septuagint, he speaks in 8.11–13 only.⁴³ To add to the confusion, another speaker is introduced by the insertion of καὶ ἐπεῖ (“and one will say...”) in 8.17. In Hebrews, this faithful speaker who proclaims his trust (8.17) and gathers the rest of the faithful children to be presented before God (8.18) is the Son. With this reading, either option presented for when YHWH stops speaking is viable. If the author thought YHWH concluded his speech at 8.13, then simply Greek traditions’ introduction of this anonymous faithful speaker stimulates a christological reading; if he thought YHWH concluded his speech later at 8.15, then this identification has further warrant within the text of YHWH’s speech where the Lord speaks about the Lord in the third person. This, as we have seen, signaled previous prosopological readings in Hebrews also.⁴⁴ If this is the case here, the text may have been read as such:

Thus [Lord 1] says, “With a strong hand, they refuse the path of the way of this people...Revere him [Lord 2] as Lord, and he will be your fear. Also if you put your trust in him, he will become a sanctuary for you, and you shall meet him neither like a stone of stumbling nor like a rock of offense...” Then those marked by a seal of the law that they did not learn will be revealed, and he [one of the lords] will say, “I will wait upon the [other] Lord who hid his face from the house of Jacob, and I will put my trust in him. Here I am and the children whom God has given me...” (8.11, 13–14, 16–18)

“Lord 1” speaks and calls the people to “revere him [Lord 2] as Lord” (κύριον αὐτὸν ἀγιάσατε). Since the Lord continues to speak about “him” in the third person, two participants, namely two lords, remain in view. For Christian interpreters, the first Lord is the Father, and the second Lord about whom he speaks is the Son. In other

⁴² Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wright, eds., *A New English Translation of the Septuagint* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

⁴³ Rick Brannan et al., eds., *Lexham English Septuagint* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012). Older translations (e.g., Thomson and Brenton) do not mark the end of YHWH’s speech.

⁴⁴ See Wagner, “Faithfulness and Fear,” 103.

words, the Father says, “Revere [the Son]...” With this reading the antecedent of the third person pronouns from 8.13–18, both explicit and implicit (as with the verb ἐρεῖ in 8.17), is consistent. This reading is also supported by other New Testament interpretations of this passage. In 1 Peter 2.8 and Romans 9.33, both authors assume that 8.14 is a reference to Christ. Those who are disobedient or did not pursue their goal by faith (in 1 Peter and Romans respectively)—those who fail to trust in him (8.14)—stumble over the “rock.”⁴⁵ If the author’s cue to read this text prosopologically came from the two lords in 8.11–16, then this offers yet another example of the resolution of a perceived tension within a base text. With this reading, the Father and the Son are portrayed in a dialogue behind the one explicitly recounted in Hebrews.

The rest of Isaiah 8.13–18 can plausibly be applied to Christ, but one clause in particular might be at odds with Hebrews. There Jesus says, “I will put my trust [πεποιθώς] in him”—with the Father as the object of trust. But in this section of text, the Father tells the people to put their trust in the Son, making *him* the object of their trust. Thus, if my analysis of this prosopological reading has correctly identified the characters for the author of Hebrews’ reading of Isaiah, then the Father asks the community to put their trust in the Son, who then expresses trust in the Father. As a result, the Son functions here as an example for the people demonstrating the loyal behavior that the Father has requested of them. This notion might seem problematic in light of recent studies that (rightly) insist that Christ is not the explicit object of faith in Hebrews;⁴⁶ however, it is important not to conflate “trust” and “faith.” Even

⁴⁵ See, e.g., Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News*, 120–70; Katja H. Kujanpää, “Paul Quoting Scripture in the Letter to the Romans” (PhD, University of Helsinki, Forthcoming).

⁴⁶ See primarily Easter, *Faith and the Faithfulness*; Christopher A. Richardson, *Pioneer and Perfector of Faith: Jesus’ Faith as the Climax of Israel’s History in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, WUNT II 338 (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2012).

though the semantic range of πιστεύω includes “to believe” *and* “to trust,” πείθω, the verb used throughout Isaiah 8, does not. Instead, πείθω means to “convince” or “win over.” With the perfect tense-form, the form used in Hebrews 2.13, it means “to be so convinced that one puts confidence in something.”⁴⁷ This is also the case later when the author of Hebrews makes human leaders the object of πείθω in Hebrews 13.17: “Follow [πείθεσθε] and submit to your leaders [ἡγουμένους].” Like Jesus, though to a lesser extent, the people are to trust these leaders as those whom God has placed over them, as well as among them.

As I mentioned previously, with the minimal introductory formula (καὶ πάντων), the addressee and basic context likely remain the same for all three quotations. For each, the primary conversation is between the Father and the Son, but they might not be the only participants in the dialogue. Due to the anthropological nature of the content, in addition to Jesus being presented as an example of faithfulness, it seems that the author envisions the “brothers and sisters” listening to the exchange.⁴⁸ After all, in the third citation Jesus presents himself *and* the children; however, the timing of this conversation also requires some discussion. In the interpretation that I discussed above, Matthew Bates speculates that the timing of the citations oscillates from before (Ps 21.23) to after (Isa 8.17) to before (Isa 8.18) the speaker’s rescue.⁴⁹ In addition to its undue complexity, a major weakness of this interpretative judgment is its failure to note the original context of Psalm 21.23. In this text, the speaker is *awaiting* rescue, which is precisely why he speaks in the future tense.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Bauer et al., *BDAG*, 791–92.

⁴⁸ Bates argues that the “people of God” are the primary addressees: “the resurrected Jesus testifies in Isaiah to the people of God...so that Jesus, here pictured as the firstborn brother, can report this to the audience.” See *The Birth of the Trinity*, 145.

⁴⁹ *The Birth of the Trinity*, “Praise for Rescue,” esp. pp. 136–46.

⁵⁰ See n. 22 of this chapter for others who argue this refers to exaltation.

Although his reconstruction for the first citation's timing is problematic, Bates' suggestion that the author's division of the citation between Isaiah 8.17 and 8.18 is due to the change in tense may be plausible. If the author sensed a change in timing, he may emphasize the temporal break by inserting a second introductory formula. Others have suggested that these words were spoken by the exalted Son,⁵¹ but this raises the question as to why the exalted Christ speaks to God in the future tense. In his session at God's right hand, Christ's reliance on the Father is no longer in question, but during his human life, particularly during the passion, a future pledge by the Son is far more likely.⁵² Psalm 21.23 after all is a promise from the speaker to praise God when, or even if, he rescues him; when the speaker makes that declaration, he is still being "led into the dust of death" (21.16). When Christ is rescued, he will praise God, but for now, he can only put his trust in him. At his declaration of trust, Jesus also presents his siblings to the Father.

This brings us to the third citation in this section from Isaiah 8.18: "Here I am and the children whom God has given to me." Even though these words are not explicitly a response in Greek Isaiah, this language, specifically "here I am!" (ἰδοὺ ἐγώ), is reminiscent of several scenes in Scripture where a person is called by direct address. One such instance is the Akedah, or "binding of Isaac" (Genesis 22). At the start of this episode, upon deciding to test Abraham, God calls him by name, and he responds: "Here I am!" (22.1). Later, when the elder patriarch raises his knife, thus demonstrating that he "fears God" (22.12), the angel of the Lord calls out to

⁵¹ Cockerill, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 142–45; Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 167–68; Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 59.

⁵² Attridge, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 90; Easter, *Faith and the Faithfulness*, 154–57; Richardson, *Pioneer and Perfecter of Faith*, 19.

Abraham again. And again he responds, “Here I am!” (22.11). At both turns in the narrative, God’s call is met with this fitting response.

Likewise, for the prophet Samuel, this phrase features prominently in the scene where God first speaks to him. While Samuel is sleeping in front of the ark, the Lord calls to him. Then Samuel responds, “Here I am” (1 Kgdms 3.4); mistakenly thinking the voice is Eli’s, he runs to him and says again, “Here I am” (3.5). After the Lord calls twice more, which prompts Samuel to run to Eli twice more and repeat this phrase (3.6; 3.8), Eli realizes that the voice is YHWH and instructs Samuel to respond, “Speak, Lord, because your servant is listening” (3.10). After Samuel repeats this phrase to YHWH, the Lord replies, “Here I am” (3.11). These calls to Abraham and Samuel among others (e.g., Joseph in Gen 27.1, 18) present the proper response when God calls someone by name. After Hebrews 1, the Father addresses the Son directly also, using not the name “Jesus,” but a number of his christological titles (Son, God, and Lord). When the Son speaks, he responds, “Here I am.” But he does not stand alone.

In Hebrews 2.13, *all* of the children—the Son and his siblings—offer themselves, but where and when this takes place is difficult to determine. One option is that the children are still on earth awaiting rescue, though they stand faithful and patient in the present. Another option (offered by Bates) is that the present tense verbs suggest that they were already rescued and now stand before the throne of God.⁵³ The prior preserves the intent of the text in its original setting, where the faithful ones from God’s people set themselves apart, but the latter allows a potential tension of the text at its face value to be resolved. Either option remains possible, and thus this detail of the conversation lies beyond our view; what is clear,

⁵³ Bates, *The Birth of the Trinity*, 145.

however, is the participants in this speech and the shared destiny of these children. The Son and his siblings all stand before God (2.13), and they are all being led to glory (2.10). The Son speaks on behalf of the sons and daughters, and his speech foreshadows his acts.

3.1.3. Summary

The Son's speech in Hebrews 2.12–13 is situated within a broader section (2.1–18) that focuses on the humanity of Jesus. While chapter 1 highlighted his relationship with the Father as a Son unlike any other, here in chapter 2 the author turns to the ways that he is like his brothers and sisters. This shift toward anthropology is facilitated by the author's dual reading of Psalm 8. The representative "person" (ἄνθρωπος) is Jesus, but not just Jesus. This person stands for all of humanity, all of those considered by God to be his children (υἱοί). This reading of Psalm 8 provides the author of Hebrews with the conceptual framework to present the fully human Jesus, "made like [humans] in every way" (2.17). Even with this emphasis on Jesus being counted among his siblings, he is also set apart from them. The author's use of the prosopological reading strategy allows him to display Jesus as one who responds to the Father directly, who "is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters," and who, even in the midst of great pain, remains loyal to God, believing that he will be rescued. In conjunction with Jesus' other speech in Hebrews 10.5–7, the author also can establish Jesus accepting his ministry, particularly his role as both priest and sacrifice, a ministry for which he is qualified on the basis of his solidarity with his siblings.

3.2. Hebrews 10.1–10: Jesus and His Offering

Throughout this study I have presented the speech of the Father and the Son in Hebrews as a divine conversation that we are invited to hear.⁵⁴ In this second cycle of discourse in 4.11–10.25, the Father speaks first again. While his side of the conversation begins with several smaller speeches consisting of citations (primarily) also found in the earlier section of text (5.5–6; 7.17, 21), the Father makes his first new speech in Hebrews 8.8–12. With it, he reveals his plans or desires for a new covenant. This covenant has a better mediator and was enacted on better promises (8.6); it forgives wickedness and forgets sins (8.12). The author concludes with a summary statement: “By saying ‘new,’ he has made the first ‘old,’ and that which is decaying and growing old is near to disappearing” (8.13). The fact that God desires something “new” presents a problem: with this announcement, the Father sends the “old” towards obsolescence. Soon it will disappear.

Lest anyone think that God prescribed the prior covenant in vain, the author offers a summary of its connections with the new. To this point, his primary concern has been to use points of correspondence between the two to demonstrate the first covenant’s “confessed inadequacy,” but here his aim changes.⁵⁵ He begins with a summary of the first covenant (9.1), its “regulations” (9.6–10) and “sanctuary” (9.2–5); however, then the author turns to offer a clue to God’s institution of this insufficient order: it was an “illustration for the present time” (9.9: παραβολὴ εἰς τὸν καιρὸν τὸν ἐνεστηκότα). But the illustration is no longer necessary. While we might applaud the author for his ability to decipher God’s clue, the author offers credit to the Holy Spirit (9.7–9):

⁵⁴ A number of interpreters use this language, such as Koester, *Hebrews*, 200–201, 548; Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 32.

⁵⁵ Caird, “Exegetical Method,” 47.

εἰς δὲ τὴν δευτέραν ἅπαξ τοῦ ἐνιαυτοῦ
μόνος ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς, οὐ χωρὶς αἵματος ὃ
προσφέρει ὑπὲρ ἑαυτοῦ καὶ τῶν τοῦ
λαοῦ ἀγνοημάτων.

But only the high priest [went into] the
second space [the inner room] once a
year, and not without blood, which he
offered on behalf of himself and on
behalf of the sins committed in
ignorance by the people.

τοῦτο δηλοῦντος τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ
ἁγίου, μήπω πεφανερῶσθαι τὴν τῶν
ἁγίων ὁδὸν ἔτι τῆς πρώτης σκηνῆς
ἔχουσης στάσιν,
ἥτις παραβολὴ εἰς τὸν καιρὸν τὸν
ἐνεστηκότα...

By this the Holy Spirit showed that the
way into the Most Holy Place had not
yet been revealed while the first tent
was still standing, which is an
illustration for the present time...

In the past humanity was significantly limited in its access to God. Only one person (the high priest) was able to go into the holy of holies, and even he had access only one day of the year (the Day of Atonement). Through this limited access, the author says, the Spirit demonstrates (δηλώω) that the “way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been revealed” (9.8). While it is certainly possible that the author means that the way had not been revealed to the majority of people, only the high priest, it seems instead that the “Most Holy Place” (τῶν ἁγίων) refers not to the Holy of Holies in the earthly tent, but to the holy space in the heavenly tent.⁵⁶ The author interprets the restrictions of the old order with an eschatological undertone: they were a reminder that more was to come. But even in the midst of his more positive portrayal of the Law (as compared with other early Christian texts, e.g., the *Epistle of Barnabas*), the author’s defense of that covenant is couched between his two statements about its ineptitude (8.13; 10.1–4). The latter of which directly precedes the Son’s speech:

For the Law, having a shadow of the coming good things—not an image of the things themselves—was never able to perfect those drawing near by the yearly sacrifices, which were offered endlessly...

⁵⁶ For an extensive defense of this view, see Cockerill, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 381–82; see also Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 438. Attridge, conversely, comments: “as long as the cultic system connected with the outer portion of the earthly tabernacle ‘has standing,’ the way to both the earthly and heavenly ἁγία is blocked” (*Epistle to the Hebrews*, 240).

it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.
(10.1, 4)

By stating this deficiency of the first covenant, the author points to God's proclamation of his new covenant that not only "takes away" but also forgets the lawless deeds of the people. Thus, a reading focused on the underlying narrative of this section presents a great tension: God has cried out that he desires an effective covenant that will restore his relationship with his people. When will that covenant appear? Will there be a reply? After the author offers a thorough explanation of the role of the old order in the saga, he finally reveals the response.

3.2.1. A Prosopological Reading of Greek Psalm 39.7–9

Drawing upon the problem with which he has just concluded (the futility of the animals' blood), the author presents the Son's speech as a part of the solution through the inferential conjunction *δίο*. Hearing this speech by the Father, the Son accepts the call:

For this reason [*δίο*], when he comes into the world [*εἰσερχόμενος εἰς τὸν κόσμον*], he says:
"Sacrifice and offering you did not desire,
but a body you prepared for me.
You were not pleased with whole burnt offerings and sin offerings.
Then I said, 'Here'⁵⁷ I have come—
as it is written about me in the scroll of the book—
to do your will, O God.'"

Much like the citations in chapter 2, the author's prosopological reading of this text allows the Son to assent obediently. But what signaled this author's use of *this* text? This psalm, like Psalm 21, has several elements that might signal a prosopological reading.⁵⁸ For instance, the speaker praises God for his rescue, even though the text

⁵⁷ This translation serves to modernize the more antiquated "Behold," while also creating cohesion with the phrase *ἰδοὺ ἐγώ* (found in Hebrews 2.13) where *ἰδοὺ* is usually translated "here."

⁵⁸ For other parallels between these two texts, see Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic*, 239–40.

suggests that he still waits for the Lord to deliver him from his enemies; the speaker is faithful and loyal. In other words, the psalm’s presentation of the speaker fits well within the framework that Hebrews has established for Jesus, particularly through his speech. Another element that seems likely to have influenced the prosopological reading is the speaker’s declaration: “It is written about me in the scroll.”⁵⁹ Here Jesus announces that Scripture attests to him. Whatever portion of Scripture the author intends with this reference, his reading strategy, identifying Jesus as a character in the text of Jewish Scripture, is validated (albeit circularly!). Before further examining the content of this citation, let us examine its text-form.

3.2.2. Text-form of Greek Psalm 39.7–9

This citation of Greek Psalm 39.7–9 in Hebrews 10.5–7 exhibits more variation from the LXX than almost any other text utilized in Hebrews.⁶⁰ Since some prior variations from the LXX in Hebrews can be attributed to the author, while others are likely inherited, each of these differences between the extant text in Hebrews and the LXX (shown in the comparison below) need to be examined individually.⁶¹

Greek Psalm 39

7 θυσίαν καὶ προσφορὰν οὐκ ἠθέλησας,
ὥτι δὲ κατηρτίσω μοι,
ὀλοκαύτωμα καὶ περὶ ἁμαρτίας οὐκ
ἤτησας.
 8 τότε εἶπον· Ἴδου ἤκω,
 ἐν κεφαλίδι βιβλίου γέγραπται περὶ
 ἐμοῦ,

Hebrews 10

5 θυσίαν καὶ προσφορὰν οὐκ ἠθέλησας,
σῶμα δὲ κατηρτίσω μοι·
 6 ὀλοκαντώματα καὶ περὶ ἁμαρτίας οὐκ
εὐδόκησας.
 7 τότε εἶπον· ἰδοὺ ἤκω,
 ἐν κεφαλίδι βιβλίου γέγραπται περὶ
 ἐμοῦ,

⁵⁹ Attridge, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 275; Koester, *Hebrews*, 438–49. F. F. Bruce, alternatively, suggests that the author read Christ into this text because David would not offer sacrifices (see *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 239).

⁶⁰ It is surpassed only by the quotation of Jeremiah 31.33–34 in Hebrews 10.16–17 (see §4.2.1).

⁶¹ The only significant difference between the MT and the LXX is that the MT reads “ears you have cut out for me” (אָזְנִים כָּרִית לִי), instead of “ears you have prepared for me.”

9 τοῦ ποιῆσαι τὸ θέλημά σου, ὁ θεός μου, ἐβουλήθην καὶ τὸν νόμον σου ἐν μέσῳ τῆς κοιλίας μου τοῦ ποιῆσαι ὁ θεὸς τὸ θέλημά σου.

Represented by the underlined portions above, the textual variations from the LXX in Hebrews are:

- (1) “Ears” (ὠτία) reads “body” (σῶμα).
- (2) “Sacrifice” (ὁλοκαύτωμα) reads “sacrifices” (ὁλοκαυτώματα).
- (3) “You did not demand” (ἤτησας) reads “you were not pleased” (εὐδόκησας).
- (4) “O my God” (ὁ θεός μου) reads “O God” (ὁ θεός) with the phrase occurring in a different position.
- (5) Ἐβουλήθην and following is not present.

With each, the question is whether the author altered the text or had access to a text with these variations. Some argue that the author made all of the alterations listed above (e.g., Karen H. Jobes);⁶² some argue that he faithfully replicates the text that he had (e.g., David M. Moffitt);⁶³ and most fall somewhere in the middle arguing for some alterations by the author to a text that had variations from the LXX text (per Rahlfs). One alteration that can almost certainly be traced to the author of Hebrews is (5), the truncation of the psalm. Whereas this might appear to be a minor change, it does not occur at a break between phrases, but instead eliminates the finite verb ἐβουλήθην. So while the LXX text reads, “I desire to do your will, O my God” (τοῦ ποιῆσαι τὸ θέλημά σου, ὁ θεός μου, ἐβουλήθην), the omission of the final verb causes the infinitive phrase to be read with the only other finite verb in the main clauses of the verse (ἤκω), resulting in: “Here I have come...to do your will, O

⁶² “Rhetorical Achievement in the Hebrews 10 ‘Misquote’ of Psalm 40,” *Bib* 72.3 (1991): 387–96.

⁶³ *Atonement and the Logic*, 236–37, n. 45.

God” (ἰδοὺ ἤκω, ... τοῦ ποιῆσαι ὁ θεὸς τὸ θέλημά σου). We will return to the impact of this reading later, but for now, we can conclude that this division of the text should be attributed to the author of Hebrews.

The second variant (ὀλοκαύτωμα for ὀλοκαυτώματα), is attested in several traditions (8 Bo 2013’ R’ L’ A’), but the LXX reading is found in Codex Vaticanus and Codex Leningrad, as well as the MT, rendering the manuscript evidence inconclusive. The third variation (εὐδόκησας for ἤτησας) and the fourth (ὁ θεός for ὁ θεός μου), on the other hand, have little evidence outside Hebrews (3: Bo 2013’; 4: 2013 Sy). Now after briefly summarizing these variations, we may turn to the first variation, the textual issue that has enjoyed the most scholarly attention to date. While the LXX reads ὥτια, Hebrews 10.5 instead reads σῶμα. This variant has commonly been explained in two ways.⁶⁴ First, the author of Hebrews or an earlier translator interpreted the Hebrew as an idiom for obedience and then substituted the whole for the part. Second, a scribe simply misread the text. The two lines are similar:

Hebrews:	HΘΕΛΗΣΑΣ(Σ)ΩΜΑ
LXX:	HΘΕΛΗΣΑΣΩΤΙΑ

But reading ΩΜΑ for ΩΤΙΑ in itself is not likely, though some further credibility for this view is offered by the previous line where ὀλοκαύτωμα (or the potential variant ὀλοκαυτώματα) provides the ΩΜΑ. If a scribe’s eye errantly caught a glimpse of that nearby word, then the addition of another Σ is a minor change. Of course the circumstances are unknown. However the variant arose, the manuscript evidence for this variant is inconclusive. Ὠτία is found in some Greek (α’ σ’ θ’ ε’), Latin (Vulgate; Irenaeus, *Haer.* 4.17.1), and Hebrew traditions (MT; עבר’); but σῶμα, the reading in

⁶⁴ See, e.g., Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 500.

Hebrews, appears in the codices Alexandrinus, Vaticanus, Sinaiticus, and Turicensis. With the evidence available to him, Rahlfs concluded that the (perceived) emendation by the author of Hebrews influenced the σῶμα reading, leading him to include ὥτια in his edition.⁶⁵ With divided textual evidence, we must turn to the possibility of the emendation: how likely is it that Hebrews altered his text to σῶμα without knowledge of a corresponding tradition? In other words, does this occurrence cohere with the author's style and language thus far?

Prior to this point in his text, the author never uses σῶμα, even though it is a common form.⁶⁶ Rather than σῶμα, the author's preferred lexical form for the human body (including the body of Jesus) is σὰρξ (2.14; 5.7; 9.10, 13; 10.20; 12.9),⁶⁷ and αἶμα is also used to corroborate the bodily existence of Jesus (2.14) as well as his bodily sacrifice (9.12, 14; 10.19, 29; 13.12, 20).⁶⁸ After the citation of Psalm 39, the author uses σῶμα three more times, but apart from an initial reference back to the citation (10.10), σῶμα is used only twice more, once referring to animals (13.11) and once in a strange construction referring to bodily torture (13.3).⁶⁹ Even though he uses σῶμα sparingly toward the end of the letter, the author continues to

⁶⁵ Later evidence, likely not available to Rahlfs, suggests that ὥτια is a younger reading. In their study of the Psalms, Amphoux and Dorival concluded that ὥτα is the "older and better" reading, which is found in older Greek psalm texts. See Christian-B. Amphoux and Gilles Dorival, "'Des oreilles, tu m'as creusées' ou 'un corps, tu m'as ajusté'? À propos du Psaume 39 (40 TM), 7," in *Φιλολογία: Mélanges offerts à Michel Casevitz*, ed. Pascale Brillet-Dubois and Édith Parmentier, Collection de la Maison de l'Orient et de la Méditerranée 35 (Lyon: Maison de l'Orient et de la Méditerranée, 2006), 315–27.

⁶⁶ In comparison, Paul uses σῶμα 13x in Romans, 10x in 2 Corinthians, and an overwhelming 46x in 1 Corinthians.

⁶⁷ Although Hebrews 9.13 and 10.20 are often read as references to the "flesh," the remaining texts suggest that the author uses σὰρξ with reference to the body as a whole, and these ambiguous instances offer no reason to decide against what appears to be the author's preference.

⁶⁸ David M. Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, NovTSup 141 (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 236–37, n. 45.

⁶⁹ This construction is difficult to translate because the rest of the verse refers to the community as a whole (with plural forms), but ends with ἐν σώματι (singular). It is likely an adjectival phrase, which *BDAG* suggests should be translated "alive" (p. 983).

use his preferred terms with more frequency (αἷμα: 10.19, 29; 13.12, 20; σάρξ: 10.20; 12.9).

One proposal that offers an explanation for the author's uncharacteristic vocabulary here is that of Karen Jobes.⁷⁰ She argues that the author alters his text in order to “achieve various forms of paronomasia.”⁷¹ Elsewhere in Hebrews, the author (likely) makes similar alterations to produce this effect. In most instances, he tweaks the text only slightly. For example, the author's citation of Psalm 103.4 reads: πυρὸς φλόγα rather than πῦρ φλέγον. By replacing the noun (πῦρ) modified by the participle (φλέγον) with a noun (φλόγα) modified by a genitive (πυρὸς), his text reads:

ὁ ποιῶν τοὺς ἀγγέλους αὐτοῦ πνεύματα
καὶ τοὺς λειτουργοὺς αὐτοῦ πυρὸς φλόγα⁷²

Other citations that our author alters substantially are those found in Hebrews 2.12–13, discussed above. As noted, the author replaces the verb διηγέσθαι with ἀπαγγεῖλαι and then adds the personal pronoun at the start of Isaiah 8.17. The result is:

ἀπαγγεῖλαι τὸ ὄνομά σου τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς μου,
ἐν μέσῳ ἐκκλησίας ὑμνήσω σε,
καὶ πάλιν·
ἐγὼ ἔσομαι πεποιθὼς ἐπ' αὐτῷ,
καὶ πάλιν·
ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ καὶ τὰ παιδιά ἃ μοι ἔδωκεν ὁ θεός.

Even so, this proposal cannot be proven with absolute certainty, as any of these variations from the LXX text might have been present in another *Vorlage* or might

⁷⁰ See “Rhetorical Achievement in the Hebrews 10 ‘Misquote’ of Psalm 40”; “The Function of Paronomasia in Hebrews 10:5–7,” *TJ* 13.2 (1992): 181–91.

⁷¹ Jobes lists the specific forms as found in Quintillian's *Institutio Oratoria*. See “The Function of Paronomasia in Hebrews 10,” 184–85.

⁷² Elsewhere this reading is found only in the Bohairic and Sahidic (both Coptic traditions), as well as some Old Latin texts (L^b).

have been made by the author of Hebrews for other reasons.⁷³ But the fact that so many of his variations *could* be accounted for in this way, particularly those with limited attestation in extant manuscripts, suggests that this possibility underlies a percentage of the variants. For the text in Hebrews 10.5–7, it seems unlikely that the author would significantly alter his inherited text-form for this phonetic device; however, if some of the variants can be explained by an alternate manuscript tradition, then the author’s text required only small changes to achieve the (intentional) homoeoteleuton—the repetition of endings—found in his quotations.⁷⁴ If variants (1) and (2) from above—those more likely to be found in Hebrews’ base text—are incorporated into the LXX text, the result is not far from the text in Hebrews:

Psalm 39 (variants 1 and 2 inserted)	Hebrews 10
7 θυσίαν καὶ προσφορὰν οὐκ ἠθέλησας, σῶμα δὲ κατηρτίσω μοι, ὀλοκαυτώματα καὶ περὶ ἁμαρτίας οὐκ <u>ἤτησας</u> .	5 θυσίαν καὶ προσφορὰν οὐκ ἠθέλησας, σῶμα δὲ κατηρτίσω μοι· 6 ὀλοκαυτώματα καὶ περὶ ἁμαρτίας οὐκ <u>εὐδόκησας</u> .
8 τότε εἶπον· Ἴδου ἤκω, ἐν κεφαλίδι βιβλίου γέγραπται περὶ ἐμοῦ,	7 τότε εἶπον· ἰδοὺ ἤκω, ἐν κεφαλίδι βιβλίου γέγραπται περὶ ἐμοῦ,
9 τοῦ ποιῆσαι τὸ θέλημά σου, <u>ὁ θεὸς</u> <u>μου</u>	τοῦ ποιῆσαι <u>ὁ θεὸς</u> τὸ θέλημά σου.

As shown by this hypothetical reconstruction, which ends where the author of Hebrews does, the remaining differences between the two textual traditions are fairly minimal, making it plausible that the author inherited some variants and innovated others, although which variants fall into which category remains only speculative. For example, with (3) the change from ἤτησας to εὐδόκησας, the author

⁷³ For example, the verb change in the citation of Psalm 21.23 might be explained in other ways. (See n. 18 of this chapter.)

⁷⁴ This literary device is related to, but not to be confused with, the common scribal error referred to by the same name. See p. 134 for one possible example.

might also be clarifying the language. If Hebrews 9 argues that God established the former sacrifices with an illustrative purpose in mind, then using a text that appears to suggest that he never asked for sacrifices creates a tension. It is plausible that to solve this, and perhaps secondarily to improve his paronomasia, the author emends the verb from a form of αἰτέω (“ask”) to a form of εὐδοκέω (“delight in”).

3.2.3. Hebrews 10.5–7: Jesus the Willing Offering

If the author has altered this text slightly to produce the literary device of homoeoteleuton, then this suggests a desire for readers to focus on or be drawn into this cited speech. The author adds further prominence to an already striking text by increasing its aural appeal, highlighting the importance of the Son’s words. Moving beyond these textual issues, let us now return to the quotation’s final form and its location in Hebrews. Yet again, the author places a bold claim on the lips of the Son; one such statement is the author’s claim that God did not desire the sacrifices and offerings.

In Hebrews 10, having outlined the ineffectiveness of the former order, the author presents Jesus speaking “when he comes into the world.” Some are inclined to focus on the implications of this speech for Christ’s pre-existence, while most situate the speech itself at the incarnation. Although this more general setting is defensible, two components of the citation offer hints at a more specific time reference. First in sequence is the introductory formula, but the interpretation of this feature hinges on the second component of interest: the adverb τότε in verse 7. This adverb, often translated “then,” can function in two ways. It can point to something chronologically subsequent, or it can point to a distinct moment, when perhaps it

would be translated more accurately “at that time.”⁷⁵ For example, Paul says to the Galatians, “But indeed at that time [τότε] you did not know God...” (4.8). The addressees, whom Paul has just called “heirs,” know God now, but they did not know him “then.” Returning to Hebrews 10.7, both options for this connective are possible. The Son might speak some of the citation at one point, and “then” speak the other, or he might speak all of the citation “at that time” with the connective serving as a transition between the two parts. This interpretive point would be inconsequential were it not for what comes next: “I have come to do your will.” This statement appears to occur when Jesus arrives at the κόσμος, rather than during his journey (whatever that might entail). This has implications for the present participle in the introductory formula. If Jesus has arrived, then the participle cannot signify an action in process, as the present often does. Instead the action is finished or complete, “When he came into the world, he said...”

Alternatively, if the connective τότε is used to denote a sequence of actions, the two times at which the Son speaks are not simultaneous. First, he speaks while in the process of entering the world, *then* he speaks at some point after his arrival. If this latter option is to be preferred, then the proposals of some that the speech occurs in Christ’s “pre-existence” might be partially correct;⁷⁶ however, the only element of this text that explicitly signals a pre-existent Christ is his body, which God “prepared” before his arrival.⁷⁷ God is intricately involved in the Son’s entrance into the cosmos.⁷⁸ Like the speech between Father and Son, an element of “symmetry” is present in the mission:

⁷⁵ Bauer et al., *BDAG*, 1013.

⁷⁶ Cockerill, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 434; Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 270; Koester, *Hebrews*, 432; Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*; Spicq, *L’Épître aux Hébreux*, 2.304.

⁷⁷ Bates, *The Birth of the Trinity*, 87.

⁷⁸ The location, not the time, is the focus of the introductory formula according to Harold Attridge: “Although the incarnation is clearly in view, the introductory verse is important not because

The Father *initiates* the gracious gift-giving with the presentation of the incarnational body to the Son, yet the Son *consummates* the gift-giving by offering this very same body back to the Father as an act of willing obedience to him, recognizing that this is what the Father ultimately desires.⁷⁹

The work of both is required for the will of God to be accomplished.

The author's portrayal of Jesus arriving to do God's will is facilitated by his truncation of the psalm text. As mentioned above, the last main clause of Psalm 39.9 originally read, "I desire to do your will, O my God [τοῦ ποιῆσαι τὸ θέλημά σου, ὁ θεός μου, ἐβουλήθην]." With this statement, the speaker expresses hope that the will of God is reflected in his/her actions—doing the will of God is future and only possible; however, in Hebrews the degree of contingency is minimized.⁸⁰ Instead the Son says, "Here I have come to do your will, O God [ἰδοὺ ἤκω... τοῦ ποιῆσαι ὁ θεός τὸ θέλημά σου]." With this reading, the emphasis is not on the Son's intent, but instead on his arrival, his entrance into the world, to do the will of the Father.⁸¹ When the Son responds to the implicit call by the Father, he uses similar language to that in Hebrews 2.12–13, "Here I have come" (10.7: ἰδοὺ ἤκω), to announce his entrance into his world and to accept the call of the Father.

3.2.4. Hebrews 10.8–10: Jesus and the First Order

Just after his citation, the author summarizes the psalm and then outlines how this text supports his contention that the new is superior to the old. The author's

it stresses a particular moment when Christ's act of obedience to the divine will was made, but because it indicates that the cosmos is the sphere of the decisive sacrifice of Christ" (see *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 273).

⁷⁹ Bates, *The Birth of the Trinity*, 87 (emphasis original).

⁸⁰ Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic*, 244–45.

⁸¹ Jobes and Moisés Silva state this more strongly: "Jesus... is represented as not merely desiring to do God's will but also as accomplishing it" (*Invitation to the Septuagint*, 2nd ed. [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015], 218).

recapitulation of the text brings the corresponding elements from the two parallel lines together:

Hebrews 10.5–7

A1	B1	A2
[θυσίαν καὶ προσφορὰν]	[οὐκ ἠθέλησας]	[όλοκαυτώματα καὶ περὶ ἁμαρτίας]
	B2	
	[οὐκ εὐδόκησας]	

Hebrews 10.8

A1	A2
[θυσίας καὶ προσφορὰς]	καὶ [όλοκαυτώματα καὶ περὶ ἁμαρτίας]
B1	B2
[οὐκ ἠθέλησας]	[οὐδὲ εὐδόκησας]

Apart from making the first two nouns plural (now θυσίας καὶ προσφοράς), he simply rearranges the text, but as a result deconstructs the parallelism of the original psalm. This allows some to suggest that the general terms “sacrifice” (θυσία) and “offering” (προσφορά) are no longer clarified by the more specific terms “burnt offerings” (όλοκαύτωμα) and “sin offerings” (περὶ ἁμαρτίας) but now become distinct units.⁸² This is supported by the fact that the latter two terms represent distinct types of offerings; however, this is not the case with the prior two terms. Θυσία often translates both זֶבֶח and מִנְחָה, but προσφορά occurs only three times in the LXX, twice referring to an unspecified offering (Ψ 39.7; Dan 4.37b) and once to a meal offering (3 Kgdms 7.34). If the author was aware of the underlying Hebrew of Psalm 39[40 MT] (זֶבֶח וּמִנְחָה), then it is possible that his string of terms could be translated: “peace offerings and meal offerings and whole burnt offerings and sin

⁸² Rather than repeating “sacrifices and offerings” for the range of nouns, I will use “sacrifices” or “offerings” as a shorthand. If a particular type is in view, I will also include the Greek text.

offerings.”⁸³ (Of course, no definitive proof has been offered to suggest that the author of Hebrews knew Hebrew textual traditions.)⁸⁴ Another possibility is that the author uses this list of terms to represent all of the offerings prescribed by the old covenant without a one-to-one correspondence in mind for these terms.⁸⁵ Either way, the rhetorical force is the same: God did not desire any of those offerings, and they did not please him.

Prior to addressing the reason for God’s dissatisfaction with the sacrifices in this text, we must return to the author’s explanation:

First saying, “sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire nor did they please you”—though they were offered according to the Law—then he said, “Here I have come to do your will, O God.” (10.8–9a)

With this reprise of the psalm, the author splits the text into two halves using τότε ἔπειτα to signal his break in the text. After his summary, he makes a striking statement: “He abolishes the first in order to establish the second” (10.9b). Here it seems that the “first” (τὸ πρῶτον) and “second” (τὸ δεύτερον) refer to the respective halves of the citation, and the halves of the citation offer representative statements about the “first” and “second” covenants.⁸⁶ The second covenant is characterized by the Son’s submission and assent to the Father’s will, but the first is characterized by unwanted offerings. But why were they not acceptable?

Since these offerings were offered “according to the Law” (κατὰ νόμον), God’s displeasure is not likely due to improper practice. Pointing to the fact that in

⁸³ So Attridge, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 274; Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, 264; Koester, *Hebrews*, 434.

⁸⁴ The most comprehensive case for this is: Adam de Jong, “The Writer of Hebrews as a Reader of Hebrew: An Inquiry into the Linguistic and Hermeneutical Use of the Old Testament Quotations in the Epistle to the Hebrews” (MTh(R), University of Glasgow, 2011).

⁸⁵ Cockerill, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 438. Buchanan, conversely, argues that the author “understood ‘sacrifices and offerings’ to be exactly the same as ‘whole burnt offerings and sin offerings’” (*Hebrews*, AB [New York, NY: Doubleday, 1972], 165).

⁸⁶ Attridge, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 276; deSilva, *Perseverance in Gratitude*, 322; Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 504–5; Koester, *Hebrews*, 439–40.

at least two instances a noun referring to a type of sacrifice is changed from singular to plural by the author (10.8: θυσίας, προσφοράς), and another might have been (10.6: ὁλοκαυτώματα), some suggest that the author is commenting on the fact that God was displeased by the plurality of the offerings. Those advocating for this position find support in the author's focus on the "once-for-all" offering of Christ.⁸⁷ But the often perpetuated assumption that the author of Hebrews categorically opposes repetition is unfounded.⁸⁸ Hebrews offers positive examples of various repetitions, and even allows for a positive reading of plural heavenly sacrifices:

In fact, nearly everything is cleansed with blood according to the Law, since without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness. Therefore, it is indeed necessary for the copies of those things [τούτοις] in the heavens to be cleansed, but the heavenly things are cleansed with better sacrifices [κρείττοσιν θυσίαις] than these. (9.22–23)

This of course leads to the question: how could the "once-for-all" offering consist of multiple sacrifices? One common explanation for this plural is that it is "attracted" to the plural form τούτοις, with which it is contrasted.⁸⁹ While possible, this assumes an uncharacteristic level of carelessness from the author, particularly due to the "problems" (for some) that result from this minor grammatical misstep. Another explanation is that the author uses a plural form because this is part of a "general principle."⁹⁰ In other words, the author offers this statement to present the logic of the heavenly sacrifices, which theoretically *could* have been plural, but due to the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice were not. Allowing for either or both explanations, the author's presentation, even or perhaps especially in principle, suggests that the

⁸⁷ Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, 264; Theodore G. Stylianopoulos, "Shadow and Reality: Reflections on Hebrews 10:1–18," *GOTR* 17.2 (1972): 215–30.

⁸⁸ For a summary of these arguments as well as an evaluation of the text, see Moore, *Repetition in Hebrews*.

⁸⁹ Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, 247; Norman. H. Young, "The Gospel according to Hebrews 9," *NTS* 27.2 (1981): 206.

⁹⁰ Attridge, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 261; Cockerill, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 416.

issue with the sacrifices of the old order is not primarily “quantitative,” but “qualitative.”⁹¹

When Jesus says that he desires to do the will of God, his pledge implies that the weaknesses of the former order will no longer be present in the new order of which he is a mediator. Bearing in mind that Hebrews as a whole may be a *synkrisis* of the two covenants,⁹² here I can offer only those critiques of the old order that are in my estimate most salient for the author’s citation of Psalm 39. One such critique is the fact that the Levitical priests offer something other than themselves. At the outset of his comparison of the priesthoods, the author highlights the fact that the Law’s priests must offer sacrifices for their “own” sins (5.1–3; see also 7.27–28; 9.6–7).

Thus, in order to fulfill the Law’s requirement for a blameless sacrifice, they offered the blood of goats and calves and the ashes of the heifer (9.13: τὸ αἷμα τράγων καὶ ταύρων καὶ σποδὸς δαμάλεως). The author explicitly contrasts the substance of the two offerings in 9.12: “He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves, but entered once-for-all by his own blood [διὰ τοῦ ἰδίου αἵματος] into the holy place thereby obtaining eternal redemption.” But the high priests were not qualified to be offerings and as a result suffered nothing. By contrast, the Father prepared a body, which is holy, blameless, and pure (7.26: ὁσιος ἁκακος ἀμίαντος), for the Son, presumably so that he might offer himself (10.5; cf. 9.7, 14, 26).⁹³

While the author does not connect this fact to his critique of Levitical priests

⁹¹ “It is the qualitative and not the quantitative difference [that] is central here: the law’s inability to perfect lies in its shadowy nature and part of that shadow was the use of animals, which are inherently incapable of conscious and willing self-offering. The quantitative difference serves very effectively to highlight the qualitative, but is not the primary focus” (Moore, *Repetition in Hebrews*, 176).

⁹² See also Martin and Whitlark, “Encomiastic Topics of Synkrisis.”

⁹³ Compton considers the self-sacrifice key also, but does not discuss the role of suffering (*Psalm 110 and Hebrews*, 99).

explicitly, the author makes clear that the Son's suffering qualifies him for ministry on behalf of humanity (2.10; 5.8).

A second relevant critique of this covenant is the fact that it cannot "perfect the worshipper" (10.1), particularly with respect to conscience (9.9: κατὰ συνείδησιν). This critique of the old order by the author of Hebrews cannot be properly understood without attempting to define his use of the terms "perfection" and "conscience" within this text. Beginning with the less problematic term, συνείδησις can be defined in this context as an awareness or knowledge of one's sin (or lack thereof),⁹⁴ which in some ways fits better with the English term "consciousness."⁹⁵ Just as the proclamation of the new covenant from Jeremiah promises that the Lord will no longer remember the sins of the people, the author of Hebrews seems to think that the new covenant also promises the people the same freedom to forget their offenses. The author links purification (either by offerings or washings) and the conscience at several points (9.9, 14; 10.2, 22), for example, in Hebrews 10.1–3:

For the Law, being a shadow of the good things to come, ... is not able to make perfect those who draw near. Otherwise, would [those sacrifices] not cease to be offered because no one would still have a conscience of sin [συνείδησιν ἁμαρτιῶν] after having been cleansed once-for-all? But instead with those [sacrifices] there is an annual reminder of sins [ἀλλ' ἐν αὐταῖς ἀνάμνησις ἁμαρτιῶν κατ' ἐνιαυτόν].

Here the author contrasts what would be the case if the old order could effect a once-for-all offering with what is the case because it cannot. The result is a contrast

⁹⁴ This is in accordance with standard lexical entries also, for example: "1. awareness of information about something" ("συνείδησις, εως, ἡ," *BDAG* 967); "consciousness" (G. Lüdemann, *συνείδησις, εως, ἡ*, *EDNT* 3.302); and in Hebrews, "knowledge of sins" (Christian Maurer, "σύνοιδα, συνείδησις," *TDNT*, 7.918). "Conscience" can also be used in this way, and so I will use "conscience" when referring to the term more broadly and "consciousness" when the emphasis seems to be epistemological.

⁹⁵ So also Attridge, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 272; Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 442. Some argue that συνείδησις should be translated "conscience" in all instances but 10.2 (e.g., Cockerill, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 431; Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 442).

between the “reminder of sins” (ἀνάμνησις ἁμαρτιῶν) and not having συνείδησιν ἁμαρτιῶν. While some might argue that the two results are not necessarily opposites, in this instance the semantic domain of συνείδησις and the context suggest that this is a plausible reading. Through his hypothetical question (“Would those not cease...?”), the author implies that the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ removes the “consciousness of sin.” They will remember their own sins no more.

Defining the second term, “perfection,” is more difficult. Since a number of prior studies offer a more thorough summary of the debate thus far,⁹⁶ it will suffice to note only three major views (in chronological order). First is the cultic view offered by Theodor Häring.⁹⁷ After surveying the use of τελειόω in the LXX, Häring concluded that this is the most likely background for the lexeme’s use in Hebrews. In eight LXX texts, the consecration of both priests and offerings is expressed through a phrase literally translated “to perfect or fill the hands” (τελεῖν τὰς χεῖρας).⁹⁸ While the cultic elements of Hebrews make this an attractive suggestion, Hebrews does not utilize this phrase, but only the verb τελειόω, and only one occurrence in Greek traditions relates to the consecration of the priestly garments without the accusative χεῖρ (Lev 21.10: Καὶ ὁ ἱερεὺς ὁ μέγας...[τοῦ] τετελειωμένου ἐνδύσασθαι τὰ ἱμάτια...). This instance in Leviticus 21 offers the *lexical* possibility that Hebrews uses τελειόω with the consecration of priestly implements in mind, but this introduces a problem with the author’s reading that contends that the

⁹⁶ E.g., James Kurian, *Jesus Our High Priest: Ps 110,4 as the Substructure of Heb 5,1–7,28*, European University Studies 693 (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2000); Moore, *Repetition in Hebrews*, 158–61; David Peterson, *Hebrews and Perfection: An Examination of the Concept of Perfection in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, SNTSMS 47 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Benjamin J. Ribbens, *Levitical Sacrifice and Heavenly Cult in Hebrews*, BNZW 222 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2016), 169–76.

⁹⁷ Theodor Häring, “Über einige Grundgedanken des Hebräerbriefs,” *Monatsschrift für Pastoraltheologie* 17 (1920): 260–76.

⁹⁸ This idiom translates מלא מן and is found in Exodus 29.9, 29, 33, 35; Leviticus 4.5, 8.33, 16.32; and Numbers 3.3.

“perfection” of Christ and believers was impossible through the old order. So while the “cultic” background from the LXX might contribute to the use of τελειόω in Hebrews, it does not offer a comprehensive definition. For this, the key question is: what is the “perfection” that Jesus extends through the new covenant, specifically in service of “God’s will”?

The only monograph to date on this theme in Hebrews is *Hebrews and Perfection* by David Peterson.⁹⁹ Within this work, Peterson allows for some variation among the occurrences of τελειόω, but argues that the unifying feature is a “vocational” dimension. Christ’s perfection is his process of becoming qualified to act as high priest, which for Peterson is closely tied to his suffering.¹⁰⁰ This perfection of Christ is, therefore, not directly parallel to the perfection of believers; instead, Christ enables the perfection of believers through his perfection,¹⁰¹ which is “the totality of Christ’s work” on their behalf.¹⁰² While, in one sense, it is certainly true that the author of Hebrews presents Christ’s perfection enabling the perfection of his brothers and sisters (if nothing else through the designation “Perfecter” [ὁ τελειωτής]; 12.2), with Peterson’s definition, the two are only connected through this logical sequence. The two “perfections” cannot be defined together since one represents Christ’s qualification for ministry and the other his ministry itself. By using this term as a christological catch-all, Peterson ultimately voids its meaning.

⁹⁹ Peterson, *Hebrews and Perfection*. Peterson draws upon the broader monograph: Paul J. du Plessis, *TEAEIOΣ: The Idea of Perfection in the New Testament* (Kampen: Kok, 1959).

¹⁰⁰ Peterson, *Hebrews and Perfection*, esp. 174–76.

¹⁰¹ “Believers are perfected by the perfecting of Christ” (*Hebrews and Perfection*, 175). Summarizing Peterson’s view is difficult because he fails to offer a comprehensive summary chapter, which is particularly necessary due to the fact that he defines the perfection of Christ and of believers differently. In my assessment, for believers, perfection is the “eschatological blessing,” comprised of “cleansing, sanctification, and glorification” (p. 158), and for Christ, it is the result of his life and ministry (p. 125).

¹⁰² *Hebrews and Perfection*, 126.

A final proposal argues that perfection in Hebrews is the possession of a “life that endures.”¹⁰³ While the author never makes this connection explicit, the two are linked at several points. Initially though, Christ’s perfection appears most closely tied to Christ’s suffering. This first occurs in Hebrews 2.10, where Christ is said to be made perfect “through sufferings” (διὰ παθημάτων, with δία + the genitive signifying instrumentality);¹⁰⁴ however, in 5.7–10, the next occurrence of perfection language, the relationship between these two events is less certain. Although this is somewhat obscured by English translations, the main clauses (with finite verbs) in this lengthy Greek sentence are: “he learned through the things that he suffered...and...he became the source of eternal salvation” (underlined below). The other verbs are participles that support the two main actions.

[Christ], who in the days of his earthly life offered prayers and petitions with great cries and tears to the one who was able to save him from death and was heard as a result of reverence, although he was Son, learned obedience through the things that he suffered, then having been perfected, he became the source of eternal salvation for all those who obeyed him, appointed by God as high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

ὃς ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ
δεήσεις τε καὶ ἱκετηρίας πρὸς τὸν
δυνάμενον σῶζειν αὐτὸν ἐκ θανάτου μετὰ
κραυγῆς ἰσχυρᾶς καὶ δακρύων προσενέγκας
καὶ εἰσακουσθεὶς ἀπὸ τῆς εὐλαβείας, καίπερ
ὢν υἱός, ἔμαθεν ἀφ’ ὧν ἔπαθεν τὴν
ὑπακοήν, καὶ τελειωθείς ἐγένετο πᾶσιν τοῖς
ὑπακούουσιν αὐτῷ αἴτιος σωτηρίας
αἰωνίου, προσαγορευθεὶς ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ
ἀρχιερεὺς κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ.

Beginning with the first half of this sentence, the fact that Christ learns obedience through suffering is presented as a result from his prayers being “heard,” or perhaps

¹⁰³ Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic*, 195 (see also 194–208); Easter, *Faith and the Faithfulness*, chs. 3–4; Kurianal, *Jesus Our High Priest*, 130–32. The author often appeals to the eternality of Christ; it not only makes him superior to the angels (e.g., 1.10–12), but also is the means by which he is appointed priest (7.16). For more on the relevant texts in Hebrews 7, see Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic*, 196–98.

¹⁰⁴ This plural form suggests that not only the cross is in view, but also the events leading up to it, whether only during “Passion Week” or throughout the life of Christ (Cockerill, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 138; Peterson, *Hebrews and Perfection*, 131). *Contra* Ellingworth who claims that “[t]he plural is probably a stylistic variant for the singular [in verse 9]” (*Epistle to the Hebrews*, 161). Lane and Koester translate this as “suffering” with no comment (Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 57–58; Koester, *Hebrews*, 236).

more appropriately “heeded” (εἰσακουσθεῖς). This raises no less than two questions about the author’s claim: (1) What did Jesus pray? And (2) how did God respond? One clue regarding the content of this plea is the author’s characterization of the Father. Jesus prayed “to the one who was able to save him from death” (πρὸς τὸν δυνάμενον σῶζειν αὐτὸν ἐκ θανάτου). One proposal by William Lane suggests that Jesus prays that his offering is acceptable, which means this description is “simply a traditional circumlocution for God...as the Lord who acts for the accomplishment of salvation.”¹⁰⁵ But the references that Lane offers (Ψ 32.19; Hos 13.14; Jas 4.12) do not reflect a standard formula, and if they did, the author’s choice to use this traditional formula here cannot be robbed of its rhetorical significance. For this reason, the simpler solution is that Jesus prays to be saved from death.¹⁰⁶ In an earlier era of scholarship this prayer for relief was thought to be a reference to Jesus’ prayer in Gethsemane (“Take this cup...”; Mark 14.36; Matt 26.42; 22.42);¹⁰⁷ however, this creates a tension in Hebrews where the author insists both that the prayer was effective (“heard”) and that Jesus “tasted” (i.e., experienced) death (2.9). Therefore, the translation “from death” is somewhat misleading; Jesus was not saved “from” experiencing death, but rather was saved “out of” that experience (ἐκ θανάτου).¹⁰⁸ God restored him to life. In further support of this reading, Jesus’

¹⁰⁵ Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 120.

¹⁰⁶ Easter, *Faith and the Faithfulness*, 120–24; Kurianal, *Jesus Our High Priest*, 70–71; Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic*, 189–92.

¹⁰⁷ See, e.g., Joachim Jeremias, “Hbr 5.7–10,” *ZNW* 44.1 (1953): 107–11.

¹⁰⁸ Hebrews and James both seem to imply that the sacrifice of Isaac actually took place. Hebrews comments that Abraham “received [Isaac] back as an example [ἐν παραβολῇ]” (11.19), and James 2.21 comments that Abraham “was considered righteousness from his works when he offered [ἀνεγκάσας] Isaac his son on the altar.” A number of commenters point to “traditions” that Isaac was actually sacrificed, but apart from some citations of the Elohist source, which apparently does not contain God’s intervention, no other sources are offered. English translations have made attempts to mitigate the language of Hebrews by translating the imperfect tense-form verb (11.17: προσέφερεν) as if the action is only in progress, which is viable, but their interpretation of ἐν παραβολῇ as “figuratively speaking” or “in a manner of speaking” (NIV) seems theologically motivated, since it is lexically unfounded (see, e.g., Robert M. Grant, *The Letter and the Spirit* [London: SPCK, 1957], 133–35). Moffitt also notes the parallel between these two texts (*Atonement and the Logic*, 192–93).

progression from death to life again explains the relationship between this relative clause and the main verb that it immediately precedes: through experiencing death—through the things that he suffered—Jesus learned obedience because he endured it and subsequently was restored to life.

This brings us to the second main action within this sentence—Christ becomes the source of salvation. Here the verb (ἐγένετο) is also qualified by a participle (τελειωθείς). This participle could be interpreted in a variety of ways (e.g., temporal, means, cause),¹⁰⁹ leaving the precise relationship between these two verbs somewhat unclear; nevertheless, what we can say with certainty is the perfection of Jesus necessarily precedes him becoming the source of salvation.¹¹⁰ Even so, the relationship between Christ’s “answered prayer” and his perfection (the first and second parts of this sentence) is unclear. Assenting to the suggestions of David Moffitt and Matthew Easter that the perfection is closely tied to the resurrection of Jesus, it may be the case that the participle summarizes what precedes.¹¹¹ If so, the relevant portion of the verse might be paraphrased:

Jesus learned obedience from his sufferings and death when his prayers to be saved were answered through his return to life, and having now been perfected in that way, he became the source of eternal salvation for all those who obeyed him.

On the one hand, the benefit of this reading is that it takes the author’s decision to bring these specific elements together seriously; on the other, it is also possible, as some claim, that Jesus being perfected refers to his exaltation.¹¹² The problem with this latter view is that it fails to account for the author’s close association of his

¹⁰⁹ Only Cockerill, to my knowledge, makes a decision on the participle, arguing it is an adverbial participle of means (*Epistle to the Hebrews*, 248).

¹¹⁰ Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 294.

¹¹¹ Christopher Richardson also offers a form of this view (“The Passion: Reconsidering Hebrews 5.7–8,” 60–62).

¹¹² Koester, *Hebrews*, 290. Ellingworth takes this to be a reference to the “passion and exaltation of Jesus, considered as a single event” (*Epistle to the Hebrews*, 294).

perfection with his humanity (life and death), which then extends to his human brothers and sisters. Rather than equating the exaltation and perfection, the author presents perfection as prerequisite to Jesus' exaltation. In other words, the exaltation, to quote Moffitt, "consummated his perfection."s¹¹³

The extension of perfection to humanity also confirms this reading. All things are put in subjection to the children of God, who are "brought to glory" (2.5–10). Humanity in Hebrews is exalted, but much like the perfection of Jesus, the perfection of humanity is tied to distinctly human elements, especially their necessary purification (9.9; 10.1; 10.14). For this reason, Moffitt argues that, for humanity, the resurrection is only one facet:

the perfection that finally allows the human being to dwell fully in God's presence involves the purification of both the human body and the human spirit. This entails more than the eschatological resurrection (especially insofar as it involves forgiveness of sins), but it is certainly not less than that transformative event.¹¹⁴

Purification is indeed part of the process of perfection, but since Jesus requires no purification, it is not mentioned in connection to his own perfection. Instead, his pure offering extends the capacity for perfection to humanity. Christ is "made perfect" when he returns to life, shedding his mortality. Through his indestructible life, he is qualified for priestly ministry (7.16, 24) by which he removes the "fear of death" from humanity (2.15) and extends his enduring life to his siblings.

After defining συνείδησις, as well as clarifying perfection language, we can now understand the author's critique of the old covenant; stemming from its broader inability to offer enduring life (10.1: "to perfect those who draw near"), the author's claim that the old order is unable "to perfect the worshipper with respect to

¹¹³ Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic*, 36.

¹¹⁴ Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic*, 276.

conscience” (9.9) refers to its inability to remove the memory and corresponding guilt of sins, both of which prohibit entrance into the heavenly sphere (and by extension perfection). Therefore, when the Son speaks Psalm 39 and recalls the Father’s dissatisfaction with the “sacrifices and offerings,” the author declares these offerings to be ineffective not due to their plurality, though this is a symptom of weakness,¹¹⁵ and not due to some improper practice, since he makes a point to say that they were offered according to the law. These offerings did not please God because he had another more effective type of sacrifice in mind, a blameless offering by a sinless high priest that can truly perfect the worshipper, even with regard to the consciousness of sins. This summary is the “will of God” referred to by the author, at least in part. Another potential component, if the Son’s speech is a response to the Father’s declaration of his intention for a new covenant in Hebrews 8.8–12, is a covenant that fulfills God’s declaration through the text of Greek Jeremiah 38.31–34, though the author no doubt anticipates some components to be eschatologically fulfilled (such as all “knowing the Lord”; 38.34). The tension between the present and future effects of the Son’s work will be explored more thoroughly in light of the Spirit’s speech that follows.

3.3. Conclusion

In classical rhetorical training, as discussed briefly in §1, authors were praised for their consistent portrayal of characters. By this standard, the author of Hebrews is successful in presenting Jesus as a resolutely faithful and trustworthy son and brother. He is gracious in his acceptance of his siblings (2.11–12), despite their frailty (2.14), and he even empathizes with their plight (2.17–17; cf. 4.15). When the

¹¹⁵ This language is influenced by Nicholas J. Moore (e.g., *Repetition in Hebrews*, 29).

relationship between the Father and his other children is strained (8.7–12), Jesus accepts his role in the mission (10.5–7) in order to offer his siblings something far more than restoration (10.10–14). But his “voice” is heard primarily in response—in Hebrews 1 after the Father addresses him directly and in Hebrews 8 after the Father presents a prophecy in need of fulfillment. In the same way that the Father’s speech lends authority to his statements about the Son at several points in Hebrews (esp. 1.5–14; 5.5–6), by placing certain texts on the lips of the Son, the author shows the Son’s self-understanding of his role on behalf of humanity.

First in Hebrews 2.12 he praises the Father in the midst of those that he calls “brothers and sisters.” Although readers may expect that this exceptional firstborn may begrudge these “inferior” siblings, this is not so. He is not ashamed (2.11). He is a model of fidelity (2.13a), and yet when he presents himself before the Father, the children of God stand alongside him (2.13b). Within this context, where the humanity of Jesus and by extension his solidarity with the rest of humanity is emphasized, this is neither the speech of a foregone leader, nor a now divine entity beyond emulation, he is “our” human brother who demonstrates faithfulness in word and deed. This is also the case, though to a lesser extent, in the speech found in Hebrews 10. In this context the author highlights the exceptional quality of Jesus, as the mediator of a better covenant based on better promises, but situates his speech at his entrance into the world. This speech highlights his assent to God’s plan. With the body prepared beforehand, Jesus enters the world to do the will of God. Although the use of this conversational model may appear strained at points, the common alternative of reading these citations in isolation fails to recognize the author’s use of these texts to develop these characters within his discourse. It also fails to recognize the consistent thread throughout the author’s use of Scripture—

prosopological exegesis. To this point in the study, the readers—the siblings—have been presented as mere witnesses to the divine conversation between this Father and Son. In the next chapter, we will explore a third speaker, the Holy Spirit—one who speaks directly to the readers and makes clear the impact of the Son’s work on their behalf.

4. Extra-Divine Discourse: The Holy Spirit Speaks to the Community

The author of Hebrews invites readers to listen to the speech of the Father to the Son and the Son to the Father. Though the author highlights the individual contributions of both characters, that discourse is “intra-divine” in the sense that it occurs between two characters identified by the author as “God” (Father: 1.1; Son: 1.8–9). A third speaker, as we shall see, is also implicitly characterized as “God” in the course of the author’s program, and this third character—the Holy Spirit—also speaks, but to those in the community—those outside the author’s category of “God.” Thus the Spirit’s speech is “extra-divine.” His discourse begins in the Spirit’s warning to the community not to harden their hearts (3.12–19), but progresses to become a promise of rest (4.1–11) and later of forgiveness (10.15–18).

Although the Spirit features at several prominent points in the Epistle to the Hebrews in addition to those within the scope of this chapter (2.1–4; 6.1–8; 9.1–10; 9.11–15; 10.1–18; 10.26–30), his role as a distinct speaker or character is contested—or at least it was. Since 2003, several articles and a PhD thesis have all re-examined the pneumatology of Hebrews, concluding that the Spirit has a “key role” in the epistle,¹ rather than the limited role suggested by previous

¹ Allen, “The Forgotten Spirit,” 51; see also Allen, “The Holy Spirit as Gift or Giver?”; Martin Emmrich, *Pneumatological Concepts in the Epistle to the Hebrews: Amtscharisma, Prophet, & Guide of the Eschatological Exodus* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2003); Jack Levison, “A Theology of the Spirit in the Letter to the Hebrews,” *CBQ* 78.1 (2016): 90–110; Steve Motyer, “The Spirit in Hebrews: No Longer Forgotten?,” in *The Spirit and Christ in the New Testament and Christian Theology: Essays in Honor of Max Turner*, ed. I. Howard Marshall, Volker Rabens, and Cornelis Bennema (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 213–27. Martin Emmrich also published several portions of his thesis in article form: “Pneuma in Hebrews: Prophet and Interpreter,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 64.1 (2002): 55–71; “‘Amtscharisma’: Through the

scholars.² This chapter builds upon that work with the more precise aim of showing that the Spirit's speech is not secondary, or limited to the written words of Scriptures, but serves a unique purpose when compared to the speech of the Father and Son. The Holy Spirit speaks (3.7) and testifies to "us" (10.15).

4.1. Hebrews 3.7–4.11: The Spirit Guides the Community to Rest

Connecting the Spirit's speech to the audience does not necessarily imply any distance between the Father and Son and the community. Hebrews 2 certainly shows the connection—or solidarity—between the Son and his human brothers and sisters. Being made like them (2.17) and suffering death (2.9) allows him to taste death on their behalf (2.9) and to make atonement for the sins of the people (2.17). The author continues this theme in Hebrews 3.1–6 where he compares the faithfulness of Jesus and Moses. These two figures are presented as examples for the community—one who was faithful as a servant (3.5 quoting Num 12.7) and one who was faithful as a Son. The author subtly uses this comparison to assert that Jesus is indeed "over" the rest of the household (3.6), making clear that this representative of humanity is exemplary (§3.1). The picture of Moses is positive in this section, despite his inadequacy when compared to the Son. In the section to follow the author will show that although Moses was faithful as an individual, he was not able to lead his followers into rest.

Eternal Spirit (Hebrews 9:14)," *BBR* 12.1 (2002): 17–32; "Hebrews 6:4–6—Again! (A Pneumatological Inquiry)," *Westminster Theological Journal* 65.1 (2003): 83–95. Since the tide has turned, nothing to my knowledge has been written in refutation. To my knowledge, the only precursor to this wave of scholarship is: Werner Bieder, "Pneumatologische Aspekte im Hebräerbrief," in *Neues Testament und Geschichte*, ed. Heinrich Baltensweiler and Bo Reicke (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1972), 251–59.

² The strongest claims are Barnabas Lindars' that "the Spirit plays no part in the argument of the letter" (*The Theology of the Letter to the Hebrews* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991], 56), and H. B. Swete's that "[i]n Hebrews, there is no theology of the Spirit" (*The Holy Spirit in the New Testament: A Study of Primitive Christian Teaching* [London: Macmillan, 1910], 248–49).

4.1.1. Hebrews 3.7–11: The Spirit Speaks “Today”

Following from this comparison, the author concludes with a promise that has a note of contingency, “We are his household, *if* indeed we hold fast to the confidence and boasting afforded by hope” (3.6: ἐάνπερ τὴν παρρησίαν καὶ τὸ καύχημα τῆς ἐλπίδος κατάσχωμεν). The next citation with which we are concerned in this chapter is linked to this statement by the inferential conjunction δίο. In other words, this extended citation of Greek Psalm 94.7–11 is in one sense the author’s extended summary of why and how to be found within “God’s household”:

7 Therefore [δίο], just as the Holy Spirit says,
“Today if you hear his voice,
8 do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion
on the day of testing in the wilderness,
9 where your ancestors tested [me] with trials
and saw my works 10 for forty years;
Therefore, I became angry with this generation
and said, ‘They are always led astray in their hearts,
and they do not know my ways.
11 As I swore in my wrath,
they shall never enter my rest.”

In the introduction to this quotation, the author of Hebrews presents the Holy Spirit as the speaker, a choice unique to his composition in the New Testament. Following from my two previous chapters on the speech of other divine participants in Hebrews, this may seem like “par for the course”; however, this introductory formula is not interpreted in the same way as those that precede it. For this reason, this section will follow a different outline. I will, first, summarize the discussion of this text offered by other interpreters; second, analyze the base text for clues about why the author might select the Spirit as the speaker; third, discuss the content of Hebrews 3.7–11 itself; and fourth, offer some comparative literature that sheds light on the author’s reading.

Turning now to the state of the Spirit in Hebrews, we see that rather than reading the Spirit as a divine agent who speaks like the Father and Son, many interpreters describe the author's portrayal of the Spirit here as an appeal to his role as the "source" or "inspirer" of Scripture.³ In other words, Hebrews 3.7 is interpreted with implied subtext: *just as the Holy Spirit says [in Scripture]...* Nevertheless, while it may be true, even likely, that the author of Hebrews associates the Holy Spirit with the text of Scripture, the three texts cited on behalf of this claim say nothing explicit about this relationship:

Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says, "Today, if you hear his voice..." (3.7)

By [the high priest's limited access to God], the Holy Spirit showed that the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been revealed while the first tent was still standing, which is an illustration for the present time... (9.8)

The Holy Spirit also testifies to us [μαρτυρεῖ δὲ ἡμῖν] about this. For first, he says: "This is the covenant I will make with them..." (10.15)

Each of these verses certainly connects the texts and traditions of the "old" order and the "new" community to whom the author is writing through some work of the Spirit, but they offer nothing overt about the role of the Spirit in the production of Scripture (verbal or written). What two of these verses (3.7; 10.15) do exhibit is an introductory formula that parallels others that introduce the Father and Son:

- | | | |
|-----|--|--|
| 1.6 | when bringing the firstborn into the world, [God] says ... | ὅταν εἰσαγάγῃ τὸν πρωτότοκον εἰς τὴν οἰκουμένην, λέγει |
| 1.7 | he says concerning the angels... | καὶ πρὸς μὲν τοὺς ἀγγέλους λέγει |

³ For a thorough summary and representative quotations, see Levison, "Theology of the Spirit in Hebrews," 93–95. Some interpreters add to this a notion that the Spirit speaks through Scripture "today": Lane, *Hebrews* 1–8, 85; Koester, *Hebrews*, 254. In his main text, Cockerill exclusively highlights the present application of the text; however, his critique of Martin Emmrich reveals an underlying concern: "[he] introduces a distinction foreign to Hebrews when he contends that the author is referring to the Spirit's present role as the one addressing the hearers through Scripture to the virtual *exclusion* of his role as Scripture's author" (emphasis original; Cockerill, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 175).

- | | | |
|------|--|-----------------------------------|
| 10.5 | when he comes into the world,
[Jesus] says... | εἰσερχόμενος εἰς τὸν κόσμον λέγει |
| 3.7 | just as the Holy Spirit says... | καθὼς λέγει τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον |

While some of the introductory formulas vary a bit more (see, e.g., 2.12–13), these instances show that the author does not differentiate the type of speech spoken by the Spirit from the type spoken by the other two agents. For this reason, it is prudent to set aside the proposal that the Spirit speaks only in relationship with Scripture and instead evaluate the stronger claim that the Spirit speaks this psalm to the contemporary community in Hebrews 3–4.

If the author considered the Spirit to be speaking Greek Psalm 94, just as he did with the Father and Son in the texts previously addressed, then we might expect on the basis of quotations discussed thus far that his prosopological reading strategy has warrant within the Greek base text—the psalm itself. Looking first for hints of dissonance or perceived tension among readings, it is useful to note that the unity of Hebrew Psalm 95 is contested. Psalm 95.1–7b calls the congregation to sing, shout, extol, and come near to the Lord. Then at 95.7c, the author introduces a conditional clause that shifts the tone: “today if you would hear his voice.” From this point, the admonition cited by the author of Hebrews continues, creating a stark contrast between the call to positive response (worship) in the first half of the text and the prohibition of negative response in the second;⁴ even with this disjunction, others claim that the psalm was indeed intended by its redactor (if not composer) as a cohesive unit.⁵ Either conclusion on this form-critical matter offers a first hint that

⁴ For a comprehensive list of scholarship, see G. Henton Davies, “Psalm 95,” *ZAW* 85.2 (1973): 183–95.

⁵ Hermann Gunkel argues this disjunction is intentional within the original composition (*Die Psalmen*, Göttinger Handkommentar zum Alten Testament 2 [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1926], 417–20). Peter Enns sets aside the question of the composition to ask “why these two parts are

this psalm's shift in tone may also, for later Christian interpreters, warrant a shift in speaker.

Additionally, while it offers little for those studying the base text alone, the preceding text in both Hebrews and Greek Psalm 94 may suggest that the author of Hebrews knew the psalm as a cohesive unit since both texts anchor their warning with a statement about the identity of the group being addressed. In the psalm, the author strings together two statements tying the congregation (or recipients) to YHWH: “we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand”; in Hebrews, after presenting Jesus as the one faithful *over* God's house (3.5: ἐπὶ τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ), unlike Moses who was merely faithful *in* it (3.6a: ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ οἴκῳ αὐτοῦ), the author instead assures his readers: “we are his house if indeed we hold fast to the confidence and boasting afforded by hope” (3.6b).⁶ While it is possible that these inclusive identity statements are unrelated exhortations preceding the warning of Psalm 94.7–11, it is more likely that they suggest that Hebrews read Psalm 94 as a whole (or at least from verse 6 onward).

Moving beyond the question of the unity of the text, let us analyze this psalm for evidence that the author of Hebrews interprets this text with a prosopological reading strategy. One possible clue is the shift in person with regard to YHWH in the MT.⁷ In 95.1–7, the psalm refers to YHWH in the third person.⁸ The last of these references occurs in 95.7c within the conditional clause, “today if you would hear his voice.” This clause is clearly tied with what precedes in the Masoretic reading:

together” (“Creation and Re-Creation: Psalm 95 and Its Interpretation in Hebrews 3:1–4:13,” *WTJ* 55.2 [1993]: 256).

⁶ Some argue that Numbers is the primary allusion (e.g., Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 201); while others prefer 1 Chronicles (e.g., Koester, *Hebrews*, 244; Lane, *Hebrews* 1–8, 76).

⁷ For Gunkel, these “wechselnde Stimmen” represent the shift from the congregation to the prophets’ recitation of YHWH’s warning (*Die Psalmen*, 419).

⁸ “Within the quotation, however, there is an abrupt change from the third person, ‘his voice,’ to the first person, ‘my works’” (Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 219).

For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand, today if you would hear his voice.

כי הוא אלהינו ונחאנו עם מרעיתו וצאן ידו היום אם־בקלו תשמעו

The change in person is then thought to be a signal that the words that follow are a recollection of what “his voice” says to the people—direct speech; however, in Greek traditions, the particle $\alpha\kappa$ with the jussive (95.7c) is translated as $\acute{\epsilon}\alpha\nu$ with the subjunctive (94.7c). With this construction, the clause would likely be read with what follows (as the author of Hebrews has),⁹ resulting in:

7 Today, if you hear his voice,	7 σήμερον $\acute{\epsilon}\alpha\nu$ τῆς φωνῆς αὐτοῦ ἀκούσητε,
8 do not harden your hearts	8 μὴ σκληρύνετε τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν
as in the rebellion,	ὥς ἐν τῷ παραπικρασμῷ
on the day of testing in the wilderness,	κατὰ τὴν ἡμέραν τοῦ πειρασμοῦ ἐν τῇ
9 where [οὗ] your ancestors tested	ἐρήμῳ,
[me]...	9 οὗ ἐπείρασαν οἱ πατέρες ὑμῶν

This reading links the two clauses together, eliminating the clear signal for direct speech. In other words, “today, if you hear his voice” becomes the protasis of a conditional with “do not harden your hearts...” as the apodosis. Then, since the relative clause in 94.9 depends upon the prepositional phrase ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ, this reading makes it impossible to read any portion of the psalm as YHWH’s speech until the use of εἶπον in 94.10:

your ancestors tested [me] with trials
and saw my works for forty years;
Therefore, I became angry with this generation
and said, “They are always led astray in their hearts...”

Since at this point first person pronouns are already in use, the one who speaks and the one who is tested are presumably the same agent. If then the shift in person cannot be explained as easily as the shift from the voice of the Psalmist to the voice

⁹ The author of Hebrew’s reading of the syntax is confirmed by the text selection both in the initial citation and in the subsequent citations of only verses 7c–8a.

of YHWH, such as in the MT, perhaps the author of Hebrews sought another speaker who could both speak of God and speak as God.¹⁰ One of the few speakers for whom this is possible is the Holy Spirit, the one presented speaking in Hebrews 3.7.

Although this does suggest that the author plausibly could attribute this quotation to someone other than, in Hebrews' terms, the Father, the content of this psalm must be evaluated to determine whether the Spirit could be the agent performing the actions portrayed within the psalm text. Before moving to the text of Psalm 94, I first must offer the caveat that, by exploring other options with regard to agency, I am neither suggesting that the Father is not a suitable agent for these actions, nor in fact that the author has an understanding of the agents appropriately referred to as "God" acting completely independent of one another. Instead, my contention is that the author chooses to portray a particular divine agent, the Spirit, as the speaker of this text because it is most suitable for both his argument and his characterization of each of the divine agents.

Text-form

With that explanation now in place, we can turn to the reading of Greek Psalm 94 in Hebrews 3.7–11. In order to understand the author's reading of this text fully, a comparison with the psalm manuscripts is in order:

¹⁰ This solution works whether Hebrews was aware of 94.1–7b or not, though his knowledge of the additional references to YHWH in the third person would seem to be a stronger signal than just the reference to "his" voice.

7c σήμερον, ἐὰν τῆς φωνῆς αὐτοῦ
ἀκούσητε,
8 μὴ σκληρύνητε τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν ὥς
ἐν τῷ παραπικρασμῷ κατὰ τὴν
ἡμέραν τοῦ πειρασμοῦ ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ,
9 οὗ ἐπείρασαν οἱ πατέρες ὑμῶν,
ἐδοκίμασαν καὶ εἶδον τὰ ἔργα μου.
10 τεσσαράκοντα ἔτη προσώχθισα τῇ
γενεᾷ ἐκείνῃ καὶ εἶπα· ἀεὶ
πλανῶνται τῇ καρδίᾳ καὶ αὐτοὶ οὐκ
ἔγνωσαν τὰς ὁδοὺς μου,
11 ὥς ὅμοσα ἐν τῇ ὀργῇ μου· εἰ
εἰσελεύσονται εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσίν
μου.

7b σήμερον, ἐὰν τῆς φωνῆς αὐτοῦ
ἀκούσητε,
8 μὴ σκληρύνητε τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν ὥς
ἐν τῷ παραπικρασμῷ κατὰ τὴν
ἡμέραν τοῦ πειρασμοῦ ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ,
9 οὗ ἐπείρασαν οἱ πατέρες ὑμῶν
ἐν δοκιμασίᾳ καὶ εἶδον τὰ ἔργα μου
10 τεσσαράκοντα ἔτη· διὸ προσώχθισα
τῇ γενεᾷ ταύτῃ καὶ εἶπον· ἀεὶ
πλανῶνται τῇ καρδίᾳ, αὐτοὶ δὲ οὐκ
ἔγνωσαν τὰς ὁδοὺς μου,
11 ὥς ὅμοσα ἐν τῇ ὀργῇ μου· εἰ
εἰσελεύσονται εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσίν
μου.

The noteworthy variations between the texts then are:¹¹

- (1) “They tested” (ἐδοκίμασαν) reads “by examination” (ἐν δοκιμασίᾳ).
- (2) Διό is found in 3.10.
- (3) “With that generation” (τῇ γενεᾷ ἐκείνῃ) reads “with this generation” (τῇ γενεᾷ ταύτῃ).

Among the variations, (3) is not attested in extant manuscripts, and (1) is only attested in Papyrus Bodmer 24, making it likely that these alterations were made by the author of Hebrews.¹² Based on the extant manuscript evidence, in addition to reading ἐν δοκιμασίᾳ for ἐδοκίμασαν (3.9) and ταύτῃ for ἐκείνῃ (3.10), the author of Hebrews also likely introduced the insertion of διό (3.10), discussed below.

(1) The rationale behind the first of these variations, reading ἐν δοκιμασίᾳ for ἐδοκίμασαν, is perhaps most difficult to discern.¹³ This prepositional phrase has

¹¹ The first two variations that I do not address are purely stylistic (3.9: εἶδον for εἶδον; 3.10: εἶπον for εἶπα). Further, both are attested in a wide range of manuscript traditions, so the evidence is inconclusive. The third is relatively inconsequential: καὶ αὐτοὶ in S Bo L A reads αὐτοὶ δὲ in Hebrews. This is particularly minor since the adversative translation of δὲ (“but”) is the least likely in this context.

¹² Rodolphe Kasser and Michel Testuz, eds., *Papyrus Bodmer XXIV: Psaumes 17–118* (Cologny-Genève: Bibliotheca Bodmeriana, 1967), 189–91.

¹³ Koester simply translates this phrase as an equivalent to the finite verb found in the LXX (*Hebrews*, 255).

been interpreted in a variety of ways (e.g., “with scrutiny,”¹⁴ “by way of proving,”¹⁵ “in their mistrust”¹⁶), though another factor is also relevant for the interpretation of this verse. Some manuscripts of both Psalm 94 and Hebrews parallel the MT more closely with the presence of the direct object μέ, in order to make clear that the object of testing is the speaker.¹⁷ Assuming the objective pronoun is not original, Enns reasons that the author introduces the phrase ἐν δοκιμασίᾳ so that “my works” (τὰ ἔργα μου) is the object of both verbs: “where your ancestors tested by examination and saw my works” (οὗ ἐπείρασαν οἱ πατέρες ὑμῶν ἐν δοκιμασίᾳ). What is unclear is how this reading is more possible with the prepositional phrase than with the chain of finite verbs—“where your ancestors tested and tried and saw my works” (οὗ ἐπείρασαν οἱ πατέρες ὑμῶν, ἐδοκίμασαν, καὶ εἶδον τὰ ἔργα μου).¹⁸ Harold Attridge (drawing upon Otfried Hofius) has suggested that the phrase “reinforces the note of accusation in the original text, since δοκιμασία has connotations of close and even skeptical scrutiny.”¹⁹ With the limited use of this phrase outside Hebrews,²⁰ and no further comment from the author, this tentative suggestion offers the most plausible rationale thus far for why the author might have made this emendation (if in fact he did).

(2) Moving then to the alteration from the far demonstrative (“that”) to the near demonstrative (“this”) in 3.10, Peter Enns suggests that this alters the reference.

¹⁴ Attridge, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 115.

¹⁵ Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 218.

¹⁶ Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 82; Otfried Hofius, *Katapausis: Die Vorstellung vom endzeitlichen Ruheort im Hebräerbrief*, WUNT II 11 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1970), 129: “durch (ihr) Mißtrauen.”

¹⁷ The MT attaches a pronominal suffix to נִסֵּיתָ reading נִסֵּיתָנִי.

¹⁸ So Attridge: “The LXX understood the testing somewhat differently, taking as its object not God, but God’s works” (*Epistle to the Hebrews*, 115). Although this reading is possible, it is not required by Greek traditions.

¹⁹ Attridge, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 115; Hofius, *Katapausis*, 213, 797.

²⁰ A TLG search yielded only three results that were not citing Hebrews (Clement of Alexandria, *Protr.* 9.84.4; Basil of Caesarea, *Serm.* 13.31; Cyril of Alexandria, *Ex. Ps.* 69 [though here the phrase is plural]).

Whereas in the original psalm the antecedent of “that” is the wilderness generation, for Enns, in Hebrews the antecedent of “this” is the current community.²¹ The benefit of this proposal is it takes seriously the application of the psalm text to the present audience as well as the timeless quality of the reading, which is for “today.”²² But this reading *also* applies the stark oath of 3.11 to the contemporary community (“They shall never enter my rest”). For this author who emphasizes the fidelity of God’s oaths (6.13–20),²³ it seems unlikely that he would encourage them to “make every effort to enter that rest” (4.11) if the Spirit had already sworn to preclude them from entering.²⁴ Due to the complications with this proposal, I find it more likely that the author chose to alter his text to further connect his readers to the wilderness generation.²⁵ The change in grammatical proximity that brings them “near” is representative of the author’s hope to increase the contemporary community’s identification with the previous generation(s). They are their ancestors, and they too faced the burden of persevering.

²¹ Enns, “Creation and Re-Creation,” 276; also Cockerill, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 178; Gert J. Steyn, “The Reception of Psalm 95(94):7–11 in Hebrews 3–4,” in *Psalms and Hebrews: Studies in Reception*, ed. Dirk J. Human and Gert J. Steyn (London: T&T Clark, 2010), 212. Wolfgang Kraus conversely classifies this as a “minimal change” (“Heb 3,7–4,11 as a Midrash on Ps 94 (LXX),” in *Florilegium Lovaniense: Studies in Septuagint and Textual Criticism in Honour of Florentino García Martínez* [Leuven: Peeters, 2008], 280).

²² Enns, “Creation and Re-Creation,” 277.

²³ The author of Hebrews uses ὁμνῶ in these instances: 3.11, 18; 4.3; 6.13, 16.

²⁴ Koester and John C. McCullough raise an alternative objective. For them, the “past” verbs in the citation make it unlikely that the author intended the contemporary community (*Hebrews*, 255; “The Old Testament Quotations in Hebrews,” *NTS* 26.3 [1980]: 371); however, this does not take into account recent developments in Greek grammar and linguistics. For just such a discussion, see Christopher J. Fresch, “Typology, Polysemy, and Prototypes: Situating Nonpast Aorist Indicatives,” in *The Greek Verb Revisited: A Fresh Approach for Biblical Exegesis*, ed. Steven E. Runge and Christopher J. Fresch (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

²⁵ Another option is that “this generation” refers to those addressed by the psalm, a group with whom the author does seem to be concerned (4.7: “saying much later ‘in’ David” [ἐν Δαυὶδ λέγων μετὰ τοσοῦτον χρόνον]), especially to extend the promised rest beyond the time of Joshua (4.8). Keep in mind that reading this text with the community of the psalm in mind does not sever the links with the contemporary community: the Spirit still calls them to hear God’s voice. What this reading does offer is the opportunity to see that this second community was not given the chance to enter rest either.

(3) The final variation that warrants attention is the presence of *δίο* in Hebrews 3.10. The phrase just prior to this particle in Hebrews “for forty years” (τεσσεράκοντα ἔτη), which was previously read with the clause that follows, now must be read with the clause that precedes it. So whereas the LXX text reads, “and they saw my works. For forty years I was angry...” (καὶ εἶδον τὰ ἔργα μου. τεσσεράκοντα ἔτη προσώχθισα), Hebrews reads, “and they saw my works for forty years. Therefore, I was angry...” (καὶ εἶδον τὰ ἔργα μου τεσσεράκοντα ἔτη διὸ προσώχθισα). This reading in Hebrews is attested in extant psalm manuscripts, but a majority are later and/or dependent traditions.²⁶ Another clue that the author of Hebrews may have introduced this variation himself is his later exposition of the psalm in Hebrews 3.17. In this text, the author asks a rhetorical question, “With whom was he angry for forty years?” With this query he demonstrates his awareness of the alternative tradition. In Numbers especially, God’s anger lasts forty years (Num 14.33, 34; 32.13), while in Deuteronomy, it is God’s provision (Deut 2.7; 8.4; 29.4; cf. Amos 2.10).²⁷ The difficulty is determining whether the author’s knowledge of these texts led him to alter the psalm or spurred his later rhetorical question.²⁸ When considered independently, the poor attestation to the variant in other manuscripts suggests that the psalm alteration is likely from the author’s hand.²⁹ The difference between the reading in the LXX and the reading in Hebrews

²⁶ For details, see Alfred Rahlfs, ed., *Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum Graecum*, 10: Psalmi cum Odis (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979), 246.

²⁷ Some separate the spans of wrath and provision into two (Hofius, *Katapausis*, 129–30; Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 189). Others import try to find contemporary significance for the audience of Hebrews (see Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 232, for a summary). None of these options is well-founded.

²⁸ For Hermut Löhr, “vermeidet der Verfasser eine langweilige Doppelung” (“‘Heute, wenn ihr seine Stimme hört...’: Zur Kunst der Schrifanwendung im Hebräerbrief und in 1 Kor 10,” in *Schriftauslegung im antiken Judentum und im Urchristentum*, ed. Martin Hengel and Hermut Löhr, WUNT 73 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994], 233).

²⁹ So Attridge, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 115; Cockerill, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 179; Docherty, *Old Testament in Hebrews*, 186; Koester, *Hebrews*, 256; Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 88–89; McCullough, “The Old Testament Quotations in Hebrews,” 371–72; Steyn, “The Reception of Psalm

is the explicit connection between seeing the works and the divine wrath. Those who experienced the Red Sea, manna from heaven, and water from a rock—those who left Egypt with Moses (3.17)—kindled the Spirit’s anger when, rather than responding aptly, they rebelled. “For this reason,” the Spirit became angry.³⁰

Any of these variations, when attributed to the author, may offer a glimpse into his distinct understanding of this psalm text. If the alteration to ἐν δοκιμασίᾳ, for example, was introduced by the author, then he may desire to increase the audacity with which the wilderness generation tested God. They “examined” him or tested him “with scrutiny,” even after the gifts of food and water and guidance. Another key feature of the reading of this text in Hebrews is the portrayed speaker—the Spirit. But most to date think that the actions of the psalm text are not appropriately applied to the Spirit. After all, within this text, the speaker has a significant role in the life of the wilderness generation and the contemporary community. The actions attributed to the speaker are becoming angry (3.10), speaking (3.10; cf. 3.7; 10.15–17), and swearing that they shall not enter “his” rest (3.11); further, through the use of first person possessive pronouns, we see that the Spirit has works (3.9), ways (3.10), wrath, and rest (3.11). To lend credence to a pneumatological reading of Psalm 94.7–11, this section will survey other literature where the Spirit is portrayed with similar associations.

95(94):7–11 in Hebrews 3–4,” 212. Docherty suggests that the author inserts this conjunction in order to split the citation into two parts (cf. καὶ πάλιν in 2.13–13; *Old Testament in Hebrews*, 186); however, Cockerill correctly asserts that the alteration has the opposite effect—“[welding] these clauses more closely together” (*Epistle to the Hebrews*, 179).

³⁰ Marie E. Isaacs, *Sacred Space: An Approach to the Theology of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, JSNTSup 73 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1992), 79–80. Isaacs puts forth a similar interpretation, though with God as the primary agent.

Intertextual Evidence

Most of this section will proceed thematically, exploring texts where the Spirit is portrayed acting in or associating with similar themes to those found in Hebrews 3.7–4.11. But first we will begin with Isaiah 63. Much like Psalm 94, Isaiah 63 refers to the wilderness generation in service of its argument. Those addressed by Isaiah question God because his perceived absence has caused them to go astray (63.17), the Prophet reminds them that God punished those who rebelled but rewarded those who returned. In addition to the shared setting (the wilderness), this text exhibits other considerable overlap with the reading of Psalm 94.7–11 in Hebrews 3.7–4.11:

Isaiah 63 LXX

10 But they disobeyed [ἡπείθησαν] and provoked [παρώξυναν] his Holy Spirit [τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον], and he was turned to enmity against them; he himself made war with them. 11 And he remembered the days of old: "...Where is the one who put the Holy Spirit among them, 12 who led Moses by the right hand? Where is the arm of his glory?" ... 14 Like cattle through a plain, the spirit from the Lord came down and guided them... 17 Why have you led us astray [ἐπλάνησας], O Lord, from your way [ἀπὸ τῆς ὁδοῦ σου]? Why have you hardened our hearts [ἐσκληρύνας ἡμῶν τὰς καρδίας] so that we do not fear you?

Hebrews 3.7–11

Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit [τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον] says:
7 "Today if you hear his voice,
8 do not harden your hearts [μὴ σκληρύνετε τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν] as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness,
9 where your ancestors tested [ἐπείρασαν] [me] with trials and saw my works
10 For forty years, I was angry with that generation and said, 'They are always led astray [πλανῶνται] in their hearts, and they do not know my ways [τὰς ὁδοὺς μου].
11 As I swore in my wrath, they shall never enter my rest.'"

This comparison consists of both lexical connections, such as their being "led astray" (πλανάω) and having "hardened" (σκληρύνω) hearts in Isaiah 63.17 and Psalm 94.7, as well as broader conceptual connections. For example, they disobey (ἁπειθέω) and "provoke" (παροξύνω) the Holy Spirit in Isaiah 63.10, whereas he is "angry" (προσοχθίζω) after they "test" (πειράζω) him in Psalm 94.10. These

correspondences suggest that a further investigation of the Spirit's work in the wilderness is warranted.

One of the more surprising elements of a pneumatological reading of Hebrews 3.7–4.11 is the association of the Spirit with rest. This too is found within Isaiah 63, though in another tradition, the Masoretic Text:

Isaiah 63 MT

14 Like cattle that go down into the valley,
they were given rest by the Spirit of the
Lord.

Psalm 94 LXX

11 As I swore in my wrath,
they shall never enter my rest.

We will return to this theme later, but in the meantime, let me be clear that I am not arguing for an allusion to the Hebrew version of Isaiah 63 in Hebrews 3.7–4.11, but instead for a broader tradition within which these two texts are situated; after all a number of other texts attest to elements of a pneumatological reading of Psalm 94, though none with the same level of overlap as Isaiah 63. In the section that follows we will explore the interaction between the Spirit and God's people as well as the Spirit's association with rest.

Within the quotation of Psalm 94, we see two ways in which the Spirit and humans interact. First, the community tests the Spirit in their rebellion (3.9); second, the Spirit responds to that disobedience through anger (3.10) and his oath of wrath (3.11). The first, which focuses on the agency of the community, fits within a broader category of texts where the Lord is portrayed as the object of a negative human action. In the Pentateuch and later recitations of the wilderness tradition, he is tested (Exod 17.2, 7; Ψ 77.18, 41, 56; 10.14) and provoked to wrath (Deut 9.7, 8, 22, Jdgs 2.12).³¹ In Isaiah 63, the divine agent is explicitly the Holy Spirit. When the

³¹ These passages are only those where a divine participant is the explicit object of a negative human action, and as such, represent only a fraction of pertinent texts.

people disobey, they provoke him, causing him to act out as though they are his enemies (Isa 63.10).

The portrayal of the Spirit in Isaiah 63 corresponds more closely with the New Testament where the Spirit is more often the object of negative human action. Working through the texts in canonical order, we see that the Spirit is “blasphemed” or “spoken against” (Matt 12.31–32; Mark 3.29; Luke 12.10); “lied to” (Acts 5.3); “tested” (5.9); and “opposed” (7.51). The most well-known of these offenses of course occurs in the Synoptic tradition—the so-called “unforgivable sin.” In these parallel texts speaking against the Holy Spirit is even contrasted with speaking against Christ (Mark 3.29; Matt 12.31–32; Luke 12.10), highlighting the active choice of one divine participant over another. This teaching occurs after Jesus is accused of casting out demons by the power of Beelzebul (Mark 3.22; Matt 12.24), which may suggest that “blaspheming the Spirit” relates to failing to acknowledge the power of God in Jesus that is mediated by his Spirit.³² C. K. Barrett among others, assuming that this blasphemy precedes a critical response by the Spirit, argues that Isaiah 63.10 provides the background for this teaching,³³ a reading that is particularly convincing when considered in light of Mark’s “new Exodus” motif.³⁴

³² C. K. Barrett, *The Holy Spirit and the Gospel Tradition* (London: SPCK, 1966), 102–7. Among those who follow Barrett are: Blaine Charette, “‘Speaking Against the Holy Spirit’: The Correlation Between Messianic Task and National Fortunes in the Gospel of Matthew,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 1.3 (1993): 65; David G. Firth and H. G. M. Williamson, eds., *Interpreting Isaiah: Issues and Approaches* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009), 217; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke*, Anchor Bible Commentary 28A (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1981), 966; Evald Lövestam, *Spiritus blasphemia: Eine Studie zu Mk 3,28f par Mt 12,31f, Lk 12,10*, Scripta minora Regiae Societatis Humaniorum Litterarum Lundensis 1966–1967: 1 (Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1968). Luke situates this teaching within a section on hypocrisy, making the meaning somewhat less clear, although Jesus’ plea that they “not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more” also appears in this passage, supporting an underlying thread of spiritual and or eschatological elements.

³³ Charette, “‘Speaking against the Holy Spirit,’” 65–66. After surveying other passages in Matthew where the Spirit appears, Charette concludes that this is characteristic of his pneumatology since the Spirit “is clearly identified with the process of judgment” (p. 51).

³⁴ See, e.g., Rikki E. Watts, *Isaiah’s New Exodus in Mark*, Biblical Studies Library (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2000).

With it, Mark is able to portray the community in the midst of a wilderness journey grieving or angering the Spirit through their unbelief, just like the previous generation.

Acts likewise depicts other humans acting against the Spirit. Acts 5 offers the first examples when Ananias lies about the profits from the sale of his household's land:

Then, Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart so that you lie to the Holy Spirit [ψεύσασθαί σε τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον] and keep back the profits of the field?" (Acts 5.3)

Later, when Sapphira, his wife, tries this same ploy, Peter says:

"Why was it agreed among you to test the Spirit of the Lord [πειράσαι τὸ πνεῦμα κυρίου]?" (5.9)

Here Peter's query parallels the Spirit's speech in Hebrews 3.9 when he says to the community: "Your ancestors tested [ἐπείρασαν] me." Though in Acts, despite the fact that Peter appeals to their negative actions toward the Spirit, this divine agent appears nowhere in the narrative account. In other words, Acts neither presents Ananias and Sapphira speaking to the Spirit nor acknowledges the presence of the Spirit, and yet the spurious actions by this couple are said to affect him. Later in Acts in Stephen's speech against the Sanhedrin, Stephen makes a similar claim, concluding (Acts 7.51):

You who are stiff-necked with stubborn hearts and ears, you are just like your ancestors: you always oppose the Holy Spirit!

Σκληροτράχηλοι καὶ ἀπερίτμητοι καρδίαις καὶ τοῖς ὠσίν, ὑμεῖς ἀεὶ τῷ πνεύματι τῷ ἁγίῳ ἀντιπίπτετε ὡς οἱ πατέρες ὑμῶν καὶ ὑμεῖς.

This text, like many to follow, has a likely allusion to Isaiah 63; further, much like the use of Psalm 94.7–11 in Hebrews 3–4, the wilderness generation is invoked in order to condemn the behavior of the present generation. The positive note for the

community addressed by Hebrews is they have not yet followed their ancestor's example.

Turning attention to the Spirit's response to human disobedience, other New Testament texts have also been connected to Isaiah 63's depiction of the Israelites "grieving" (MT: עצב) or "provoking" (LXX: παροξύνω) the Holy Spirit.³⁵ One such text is Hebrews 10.28–29:

Anyone rejecting the law of Moses suffered death without mercy on the basis of the testimony of two or three. How much worse do you think the punishment considered worthy will be for those who [by sinning deliberately] trample the Son of God underfoot, who regard the blood of the covenant, which is consecrated, as profane, and who outrage the Spirit of grace?

Among the list of effects that the author of Hebrews provides, only one describes a reaction by a divine participant. The Son is trampled, and his blood treated as though it was of little value (κοῖνος), but the Spirit is the one responds, specifically by being "outraged" (ἐνυβρίζω). Occurring within Hebrews, this is perhaps the most important example since this similar reaction lends credence to the notion that the author of Hebrews plausibly envisions the Spirit "becoming angry" (3.10) and "swearing in his wrath" (3.11) since parallel actions appear in Hebrews 10.29.

The final text with a perceived allusion to Isaiah 63.10 is Ephesians 4.30: "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God with whom you have been sealed for the day of redemption."³⁶ This passage encourages the community to cease any divisive behavior, appealing to the effect of their negative actions on the Holy Spirit. Gordon Fee remarks that:

³⁵ For example, Levison, "Theology of the Spirit in Hebrews," 104–5. This subcategory could fall under the first category also since the Holy Spirit is technically the object of ἐνυβρίσας; however, my focus in this example is the portrayal of an emotional response (anthropomorphic or otherwise) on the part of the Spirit.

³⁶ This text may relate to 1 Thessalonians 5.19's prohibition ("Do not quench the Holy Spirit"), though in the context the latter appears to refer to limiting the Spirit's role in prophecy or a related ecstatic experience.

these words not only “echo” the language of an OT passage, in this case Isa 63.10, but at the same time reflect interests similar to that passage (Isa 63.1-19)...[T]he prophet applies that oracle to Israel’s present situation, but in light of their past.³⁷

As Fee implies, this passage may have been selected due to its interplay between the wilderness generation and the community addressed by Isaiah, which is then extended to the community addressed by Ephesians. This complex web parallels the one found within the reading of Psalm 94 in Hebrews 3.7–4.11,³⁸ offering the contemporary readers with generations of examples of those who “grieved” the Spirit. Therefore, several New Testament passages refer to the Spirit as the object of negative human actions, such as “lying” (Acts 5.3), “testing” (5.9), and “blaspheming/speaking against” (Mark 3.29; Matt 12.31–32; Luke 12.10) the Holy Spirit, while other passages refer to the Spirit’s response, such as “outrage” (Heb 10.29) and “grief” (Eph 4.30). With these texts in mind, the portrayal of the wilderness generation “testing” and “trying” the Holy Spirit in Hebrews 3.7–4.11, which results in his “anger” and enraged “oath,” appears within a broad tradition of texts in the work of a range of distinct New Testament authors.

As we have seen, in addition to the Spirit responding to and being the object of rebellion, the Spirit’s association with rest in Hebrews’ reading of Psalm 94.7–11 is also corroborated by other literature. Isaiah 63.14 (MT), for example, reads: “Like cattle that go down into the valley, they were given rest by the Spirit of the Lord.” Although we certainly cannot assume that Hebrews was directly aware of this individual text, especially given the lack of proof that he interacted with any Hebrew

³⁷ Gordon D. Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 713.

³⁸ For an engaging discussion of the relationship between the past and present in Hebrews (and 1 Corinthians 10), see Löhr, ““Heute, wenn ihr seine Stimme hört...””

versions, this reading is consistent with a broader tradition in which an intermediary of YHWH extends rest.³⁹ This agent is most often Sophia, personified wisdom:

When I enter my house,
I shall find rest with her;
for companionship with her has no bitterness,
and life with her has no pain, but gladness and joy. (Wis 8.16)

For at last you will find the rest she gives,
and she will be changed into joy for you. (Sir 6.28)

Like Hebrews, these texts associate rest, whatever each author might mean by that term, with the righteous behavior of those who seek God. Although Sophia, and not the Spirit, is the agent depicted in these texts, the two figures are often connected in Jewish literature, a tradition sometimes found in Christian writings also. Even in Wisdom of Solomon, the author (the “Sage”) at several points refers to Sophia as a spirit:

For wisdom is a benevolent spirit and will not hold guiltless a blasphemous person for his/her lips because God is a witness of [that person’s] inmost feelings...[and] because the Spirit of the Lord has filled the world, and the one who holds all things together has knowledge of [every] voice. (Wis 1.5–7; cf. 7.7; 7.22)

Who knows your will, unless you gave Wisdom and sent your Holy Spirit from the highest places? ...Humans were taught the things that are acceptable, and they were saved by Wisdom. (9.17–18)

Neither text makes the one-to-one correspondence between the Holy Spirit/Spirit of the Lord and Wisdom, but each appears to form a synthetic parallel in which the

³⁹ Mark J. Boda argues this text should be emended. He summarizes his view as such: “MT Isa 63.14 reads $\sqrt{\text{נהל}}$, but should be read $\sqrt{\text{נהל}}$ because: (1) the versions indicate this reading; (2) cattle ‘going down’ to the plain need guidance not rest; (3) leadership is the main emphasis both in [Isa 63.13–14]. Even if $\sqrt{\text{נהל}}$ is not the original reading, the context makes clear that this Spirit led the people” (*Praying the Tradition: The Origin and Use of Tradition in Nehemiah 9*, BZAW [Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999], 157, n. 335). Of the three reasons outlined by Boda, only (1)—the readings in the LXX, Syriac, and Targum—seems strong enough to consider an emendation. Others do not follow this proposal: Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56–66*, AB 19C (New York: Doubleday, 2003), 261–62; John N Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah*, NICOT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 603; John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 34–66*, WBC 25 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987), 902; Claus Westermann, *Isaiah 40–66* (Westminster John Knox, 1969), 389–90.

actions of these two figures (and by extension the figures themselves) are closely associated.

In early Christian literature the connection between the Spirit and Wisdom continues and even advances in so far as the connection is made explicit by Theophilus of Antioch and Irenaeus of Lyons.⁴⁰ Both work from Greek Psalm 32.6 to show that the Word (Christ) and Wisdom (Spirit) were active in creation:

The heavens were strengthened by the Word of the Lord [τῷ λόγῳ τοῦ κυρίου], all their power by the Spirit of his mouth [τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ].⁴¹

While this occurs at several points in both Theophilus and Irenaeus, one of the clearest passages is *Against Heresies* 4.20.3:⁴²

And that the Word, namely the Son, was always with the Father, as I have largely demonstrated, and that Wisdom, namely the Spirit, was with him before all creation, as he said through Solomon [in Proverbs 3.19]: “By Wisdom God founded the earth; he prepared heaven by understanding...”

Et quoniam Verbum, hoc est Filius, semper cum Patre erat, per multa demonstravimus. Quoniam autem et Sapientia, quae est Spiritus, erat apud eum, ante omnem constitutionem, per Salomonem ait: Deus sapientia fundavit terram, paravit autem caelum prudentia...

In these early articulations of a triune God, the Father, his Word, and Wisdom paralleled the Father, Son, and Spirit of the New Testament, suggesting that texts about Sophia might be read by New Testament authors with the Spirit in mind.

Moreover, this theme is not the only connection between Sophia and the Spirit. All

⁴⁰ “[W]hy do Theophilus and Irenaeus make the connection they do when passages in Scripture and in Justin join the title to the Son? It would seem that the most likely answer lies in a traditional association of spirit and wisdom language that finds a place in both Theophilus and Irenaeus” (Anthony Briggman, *Irenaeus of Lyons and the Theology of the Holy Spirit*, Oxford Early Christian Studies [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012], 126).

⁴¹ Though the psalm in isolation almost certainly should be interpreted “breath of his mouth,” this translation represents the reading of πνεῦμα as “Spirit” necessary for the argument in Theophilus and Irenaeus.

⁴² *Contre les hérésies. Livre 4, Édition critique d’après les versions arménienne et latine*, ed. Adelin Rousseau et al., Sources chrétiennes 100 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1965), 632–33. For a more thorough discussion of the relationship between Sophia and the Spirit in early Christian literature (particularly Irenaeus), see Briggman, *Irenaeus of Lyons and the Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 126–48; Jacques Fantino, *La théologie d’Irénée: lecture des Ecritures en réponse à l’exégèse gnostique: une approche trinitaire* (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1994), 287–91.

of which lends credence to the implicit claims made by means of the pneumatological reading of Psalm 94.7–11 found in Hebrews.

4.1.2. Hebrews 3.12–19: The Ancestors' Inability to Enter

After the initial quotation of Psalm 94.7–11, Hebrews continues with an extended explanation that consists of both exposition and exhortation. While the author's reading of Psalm 94 anchors the whole of 3.7–4.11, many split the portion of Hebrews following the initial citation into two parts: 3.12–19; 4.1–11. The rationale for this split is often based on the tone,⁴³ though the focus also shifts from the past to the present recipients of God's promise.⁴⁴ The first section, Hebrews 3.12–19, has an admonitory tone and discusses the original provision of the promised rest. Before turning back toward the original wilderness generation, the author exhorts his readers (3.12–14). With this appeal, the author previews an important point: the community must continue for as long as "today" is called "today." By exploiting the relative quality of this temporal designation, the author makes his appeal and the quotation durative for the whole of the present age. "Today," if they hear God's voice, they must respond (3.12), and they must encourage one another to do the same (3.13), for this is a message for neither "tomorrow" nor "yesterday."⁴⁵

While God and Christ are explicitly mentioned in this section (3.12–14), when the other so-called "warning passages" are examined, a similar pattern

⁴³ Koester, *Hebrews*, 262–63.

⁴⁴ Cockerill, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 174; Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 237.

⁴⁵ This does not preclude interpretations that argue "today" refers to the present age (Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 87), although the fact that this was originally spoken "by" or "in connection with" David (ἐν Δαυὶδ) suggests that the author has a broader span in mind. See also §2.1.3 on Hebrews 1.5.

emerges.⁴⁶ In the first four warning passages (including the one in question), Father, Son, and Spirit appear within close succession:

[H]ow are we to escape if we neglect so great a salvation? [One] first received to be spoken by the Lord was then confirmed to us by those who heard, while likewise God testified [συνεπιμαρτυροῦντος] to it by signs, wonders, various miracles, and distributions of the Holy Spirit according to his will. (2.3–4)

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, who tasted the heavenly gift and became partakers of the Holy Spirit, and who tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age, and who fall away, to be renewed for repentance again because they would crucify the Son of God again and subject him to disgrace (6.4–6)

How much worse do you think the punishment considered worthy will be for those who [by sinning deliberately] trample the Son of God underfoot, who regard the blood of the covenant, which is consecrated, as profane, and who outrage the Spirit of grace?... It is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God. (10.29, 31)

Each of these other texts is situated within a section more focused on the Father or Son, but the author appeals to all three divine participants to exhort the community.⁴⁷ The focus does not shift to a new primary agent in these other instances, but instead the participation of the other divine figures supplements the work of the first. So also here in Hebrews 3.7–4.11, the author’s appeal through the speech of the Spirit is bolstered through the passage that follows.

Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says... (3.7)
Pay attention, brothers and sisters, lest anyone among you has an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. But encourage each other each day as along as it is called “today,” so that none

⁴⁶ For a more thorough discussion of the warning passages and the broader boundaries for the passages, see Scot McKnight, “The Warning Passages of Hebrews: A Formal Analysis and Theological Conclusions,” *TJ* 13.1 (1992): 21–59.

⁴⁷ Another “cluster” appears in Hebrews 9.14: “How much more then will the blood of Christ, which he offered blameless to God through the eternal Spirit, cleanse our conscience from dead works so that we might serve the living God?” Although a wide variety of proposals connect this spirit with Christ in some way (Attridge, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 251; David A. deSilva, *Perseverance in Gratitude: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000], 306), most favor the identification of the “eternal Spirit” with the “Holy Spirit” (Albert Vanhoye, “Esprit éternel et feu du sacrifice en He 9,14,” *Bib* 64.2 [1983]: 263–74; cf. ; Cockerill, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 398; Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 457; Lane, *Hebrews* 1–8, 240; Koester, *Hebrews*, 410–11).

among you is hardened by the deception of sin—for we have become partakers in Christ, if indeed we hold on to [our] original confession until the end. (3.12–14)⁴⁸

He defines what it means to “hear [God’s] voice” (3.7): sharing in Christ if they are holding fast to the original confession (3.14) and not falling away from the living God in rebellion (3.12).

Other evidence, such as the introductory formula in Hebrews 3.15, also suggests that, although no longer explicitly mentioned, the Spirit is present through his constant speaking role. Rather than using the active formula that the author prefers throughout Hebrews,⁴⁹ here he switches to a passive formula: “as has just been said,” (ἐν τῷ λέγεσθαι).⁵⁰ The text introduced is not a full re-citation of Psalm 94.7–11, but is instead a shorter quotation of just 94.7–8. Though truncated, this shorter citation likely refers back to the original in 3.7–11 since some elements within the rhetorical questions that follow refer to elements found outside the second quotation.⁵¹

Hebrews 3.16, 17, 18

For who were those who heard and rebelled?

τίνες γὰρ ἀκούσαντες παρεπίκραναν;

Hebrews 3.7–8, 10, 11

Today if you hear his voice, do not harden your heart as in the rebellion...

σήμερον ἐὰν τῆς φωνῆς αὐτοῦ ἀκούσητε, μὴ σκληρύνητε τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν ὡς ἐν τῷ παραπικρασμῷ.

⁴⁸ Though the distance between the reference to the Spirit and God is greater in this instance, one must remember that the material not repeated above is the content of the Spirit’s speech (3.7–11).

⁴⁹ The passive formula also occurs at 4.7; 7.17; 11.18.

⁵⁰ This translation is Lane’s (*Hebrews* 1–8, 81). Other translations of this formula are: “when it says” (Koester, *Hebrews*, 254); “while it is being said” (Cockerill, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 190); “(exhort) by saying” (Attridge, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 113). Ellingworth offers no explicit translation but contends that the agent is “Scripture,” perhaps interpreting λέγεσθαι as middle rather than passive (*Epistle to the Hebrews*, 228–29).

⁵¹ Lane, *Hebrews* 1–8, 88. I agree with Koester that the re-citation at 3.15 introduces the rhetorical questions in 3.16–19, but the material referenced in those citations comes from other portions of Psalm 94 that are not quoted again (*Hebrews*, 261).

And with whom did he become angry
for forty years?

τίσιν δὲ προσώχθισεν τεσσαράκοντα
ἔτη;

For this reason, I became angry with
this generation...

διὸ προσώχθισα τῇ γενεᾷ ταύτῃ

And with whom did he swear would not
enter his rest if not those who
disobeyed?

τίσιν δὲ ῥμωσεν μὴ εἰσελεύσεσθαι εἰς
τὴν κατάπαυσιν αὐτοῦ εἰ μὴ τοῖς
ἀπειθήσασιν;

As I swore in my wrath, they shall
never enter my rest.

ὥς ῥμωσα ἐν τῇ ὀργῇ μου· εἰ
εἰσελεύσονται εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσίν μου.

Although these questions also refer to elements within the broader pentateuchal narrative, such as the reference to “bodies falling” (Heb 3.17; Num 14.29), the order and language of the author’s queries closely mirrors Psalm 94.7–11. Since then these two portions (3.7–11 and 3.16–18) are intentionally linked, the divine agent to whom the author refers is almost certainly the speaker of the first quotation because they perform the same actions. Further, rather than introducing this re-citation with “he says,” the passive introductory formula avoids any possible confusion about a new speaker introduced by the reference to God and Christ in 3.12–14 since he refers back to the quotation, not the act of speaking.

Nonetheless, whoever the agent is, we see the author’s primary concern is not who responded, but who initiated the response by acting in rebellion. At the close of these questions, the author translates the sins of the wilderness generation: “So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief [δι’ ἀπιστίαν]” (3.19). Were the author referring only to the refusal to believe the spies’ report (Num 14.1–4), or the grumbling at Massah (Exod 17.1–7) and Meribah (Num 20.1–13),⁵² the readers could set aside the warning of Psalm 94 as a message for the past, but the

⁵² In Psalm 95 MT these places are explicitly mentioned, whereas in Greek traditions the place names are translated rather than transliterated.

author's broader warning against "unbelief," as we shall continue to see, is a warning for "today."

4.1.3. Hebrews 4.1–11: The Promise to Enter Still Remains

Hebrews 4 contains three additional partial quotations of Psalm 94.7–11, all of which are spoken by the Spirit. But this section does not merely offer the original wilderness generation as an example. Following from the conclusion that the previous wilderness generation was not able to obtain or enter the promised rest, the author summarizes the implications for the present community that "a promise to enter his rest still remains" (4.1: καταλειπομένης ἐπαγγελίας εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσιν αὐτοῦ). The extension of the promise that they might "enter" rest is the first explicit indication that the author envisions the community in motion toward a goal, which is at this stage in the argument "rest." In many later instances the author similarly uses a prefixed form of ἔρχομαι to describe the community's spiritual progress in terms of a physical journey. For example, in the conclusion to this section, his exhortation to "make every effort to enter that rest" (4.11) precedes another to "approach the throne of grace with confidence" (4.16). Before the end of Hebrews, the author will also depict their journey in terms of approaching "Mount Zion and the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem" (12.22) as well as entering the "Most Holy Place" (10.19). Further, he describes those who are saved or perfected as "those who approach" (7.25; 10.1: οἱ προσερχόμενοι); the faithful are those in motion. Finally, the city and the mountain contrasted with Sinai are placed

in apposition in Hebrews 12.22, which makes clear the overlap between those two places for the author.⁵³

The overlap between the promised rest and this destination is another matter. To what extent is “rest” associated with the heavenly city/mountain? Although rest may be a separate “complex symbol for the whole soteriological process”⁵⁴ or the “millennial reign” or “kingdom,”⁵⁵ This “journeying” motif, first described by Ernst Käsemann as “wandering” (*wandernde*),⁵⁶ and then by C. K. Barrett as “pilgrimage,”⁵⁷ almost certainly culminates in Hebrews 12, when the people reach the “city of the living God” (12.22).⁵⁸ Elsewhere within Scripture, God’s “resting place” is similarly located in Zion.⁵⁹

the Lord has chosen Zion; he has selected it as a dwelling place for himself: “This is my resting place [ἡ κατάπαυσις μου] forever; here I will dwell because I selected it.” (Ψ 131.13–14)

And it is associated with heaven:

Heaven is my throne,
and the earth is my footstool;

⁵³ Nicholas J. Moore disambiguates this further in a forthcoming essay. See “‘In’ or ‘Near’? Heavenly Access and Christian Identity in Hebrews,” in *Muted Voices of the New Testament: Readings in the Catholic Epistles and Hebrews*, ed. Katherine M. Hockey, Madison N. Pierce, and Francis Watson, LNTS 565 (London: T&T Clark, 2017), 185–98.

⁵⁴ Attridge, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 128. Attridge allows for the overlap among these terms espoused by Hofius (*Katapausis*, 53–54), but insists that “to determine the basic sense of the term here by appeal to parallel material is questionable” (“Let Us Strive to Enter That Rest’ the Logic of Hebrews 4:1–11,” *HTR* 73.1/2 [1980]: 283).

⁵⁵ Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., “Promise Theme and the Theology of Rest,” *BSac* 130.518 (1973): 135–50.

⁵⁶ Ernst Käsemann, *Das wandernde Gottesvolk: Eine Untersuchung zum Hebräerbrief*, FRLANT 55 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1939).

⁵⁷ C. K. Barrett, “The Eschatology of the Epistle to the Hebrews,” in *The Background of the New Testament and Its Eschatology*, ed. W. D. Davies and D. Daube (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956), 363–93. Barrett seems to think of his proposal following Käsemann, despite the vast difference in terminology. He writes: “The people are God are well described in the title of Dr E. Käsemann’s penetrating study of Hebrews: they are ‘das wandernde Gottesvolk,’ a pilgrim people, like Israel in the wilderness” (p. 376). For an evaluation of the term “pilgrimage,” as well as further discussion of the history of this interpretation, see William G. Johnsson, “The Pilgrimage Motif in the Book of Hebrews,” *JBL* 97.2 (1978): 239–51.

⁵⁸ Cockerill, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 197; deSilva, *Perseverance in Gratitude*, 163; Easter, *Faith and the Faithfulness*, 80–81; Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 234–35; Jon Laansma, “I Will Give You Rest”: The “Rest” Motif in the New Testament with Special Reference to Mt 11 and Heb 3–4, *WUNT* II 98 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), 281.

⁵⁹ The parallel texts that follow are from Matthew Thiessen, “Hebrews and the End of the Exodus,” *NovT* 49.4 (2007): 359–60.

what sort of house will you build for me?

What sort of place will you build as my resting place? (Isa 66.1)

These passages suggest that it is plausible that the author of Hebrews considers these terms to be interchangeable eschatological destinations for the people of God.⁶⁰ If this motif is operative, then what are the implications for a pneumatological reading of this passage? What role might the Spirit have in the community's journey? Before answering these questions, let us first return to the question of agency in this section to establish that the Spirit remains the primary divine agent throughout this section of text.

If the rhetorical questions point back to the original citation where the Spirit is the agent, then he remains the active divine participant in the material leading up to the next citation of Psalm 94.7–11 in Hebrews 4.3:

For we who believe enter into rest, just as he has said:

“As I swore in my wrath,
you shall never enter my rest.”

This is the first citation with an active introductory formula, and since God is thought to be primary agent even in the quotation attributed to the Spirit, here the implied speaker is often identified as God.⁶¹ What is also strange about this quotation is the point the author makes with it. Rather than using the oath against the wilderness generation as evidence of the punishment due to those who do not

⁶⁰ I agree with Matthew Thiessen that the author envisions this community on the *same* journey as their ancestors; however, my reading differs from Thiessen at two points: (1) the motif of “journeying” does not begin with the Exodus, but with Abraham (see 11.9–10, 13–15; cf. 11.22, 38); (2) Hebrews does not necessarily argue that the Israelites never took possession of the land. What seems more likely is the author redefines the goal of the Exodus, intentionally eliminating any discussion of the intermediate milestone that occurred at their entrance into Canaan. In Joshua, which is where Thiessen bases much of his argument about the land, “rest” is typically from their enemies (e.g., Josh 10.20; 11.23; 23). Joshua 21.44, which Thiessen cites as a key text in his favor, is no exception: “Then the Lord our God rested [κατέπαυσεν] them from all around in the manner that he swore to their ancestors. No one was raised up again them from among any of their enemies. The Lord delivered all their enemies into their hands.”

⁶¹ Harold W. Attridge, “God in Hebrews,” in *The Epistle to the Hebrews and Christian Theology*, ed. Richard Bauckham et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 105; Cockerill, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 206; Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 92. Ellingworth, however, claims the agent is “Scripture” (*Epistle to the Hebrews*, 247). He is not followed, to my knowledge.

believe, this, he says, is evidence that those who *do* believe are able to enter the promised rest. The author then moves into clarifying the nature of this rest by demonstrating that it is built into the logic of creation:

And yet the works took place at the foundation of the world, for somewhere he has said this concerning the seventh day: “And God [ὁ θεός] rested on the seventh day from all his works.”

With this quotation, the distinct works of the Father and Spirit become more difficult to untangle from one another. On the one hand, the works and rest are associated with “God” in the Genesis 2.2 quotation, but on the other hand, the speaking agent can still retain an independent function within Hebrews, even if his agency becomes blurred within the quoted material.

One clue that the author intends to keep the Spirit and God separate is found within the quotation of Genesis 2.2. Though slight, the single variation between the text in Hebrews and the text in the LXX contributes to this question of agency:

Genesis 2.2 LXX

and he rested on the seventh day from all his works...

καὶ κατέπαυσεν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἐβδόμῃ ἀπὸ πάντων τῶν ἔργων αὐτοῦ

Hebrews 4.4

And God rested on the seventh day from all his works.

καὶ κατέπαυσεν ὁ θεὸς ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἐβδόμῃ ἀπὸ πάντων τῶν ἔργων αὐτοῦ.

This variation has sometimes been explained on the basis of an alternative textual tradition, evidence of which is found in Philo (*Post.* 18);⁶² however, the limited manuscript evidence for these reading is all plausibly attributed to the influence of Hebrews.⁶³ Further, Philo also evinces the LXX reading: Κατέπαυσεν οὖν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ

⁶² Cockerill, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 206. Ellingworth thinks any shared tradition or direct influence is “unlikely” (*Epistle to the Hebrews*, 248).

⁶³ For a detailed account of the evidence, see John William Wevers, ed., *Genesis*, *Vetus Testamentum Graecum* 1 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1974), 83.

τῇ ἐβδόμῃ ἀπὸ πάντων τῶν ἔργων αὐτοῦ (*Leg.* 1.6).⁶⁴ He may well be quoting this text from memory or have two *Vorlagen*, but he may also be adapting the quoted text to fit the context in which it is used. Within *Legum Allegoriae*, this occurrence of Genesis 2.2 occurs within Philo’s verse-by-verse commentary on the text. When he transitions to a new verse, rather than offering an introduction, he simply quotes the relevant portion. The text then retains its original context because each verse is treated in turn. But in *De posteritate Caini*, Philo weaves the quotation into his discussion of how the number seven is superior to the numbers that precede it, just as some younger sons are superior to their elder. He introduces the quotation as such:

But also he [Moses] reveals in his explanation of creation, saying:
 “And God rested on the seventh day from all of his works that he had made; and God blessed the seventh day and made it holy because on it he rested from all his works, which God began to do.”⁶⁵ (*Post.* 18.64)

This is instructive for the discussion of Psalm 94 in Hebrews in two ways. First, the most proximate reference to “Moses” occurs several paragraphs earlier (*Post.* 9.28), but modern editions identify the implied speaker(s) throughout as Moses, since he is the one who “speaks” the Pentateuch in this work.⁶⁶ Second, the spoken introduction of Genesis 2.2 offers evidence that the author of Hebrews may be clarifying the agent of the quotation so that “he” is differentiated from the speaking agent.⁶⁷ If the

⁶⁴ Philo, *On the Creation. Allegorical Interpretation of Genesis 2 and 3*, trans. F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker, LCL 226 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1929), 154–55. The change from καί το οὖν is likely stylistic. Were οὖν not a postpositive conjunction, this change would likely be interpreted as a mere transition. Ronald Williamson suggests either or both variations may be evidence that Philo quotes this verse from memory, but cautions against any strong claims based on the limited evidence available (*Philo and the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 540).

⁶⁵ Philo, *On the Cherubim. The Sacrifices of Abel and Cain. The Worse Attacks the Better. On the Posterity and Exile of Cain. On the Giants.*, trans. F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker, LCL 227 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1929), 362–63.

⁶⁶ For example, Philo, LCL 227, 342–43; Yonge, *The Works of Philo*, 134–38.

⁶⁷ For the view that the author inserted ὁ θεός to clarify the agent, though not necessarily to differentiate from the speaking agent, see Koester, *Hebrews*, 271. Docherty also implies that the author of Hebrews made this alteration to the text, but offers no suggestion as to why (*Old Testament in Hebrews*, 139).

author envisioned both third person references to be the same participant, no clarification would be necessary because the agent implied in the introductory formula would carry over to the action within the quoted text.⁶⁸ Moreover, if God had been the primary divine agent throughout Hebrews 3.7–4.11, then the author would have no reason to refer to him here explicitly.

If the Spirit is accepted as the agent to this point, then the rest of the passage is relatively straightforward. In hopes of moving on to the implications of a pneumatological reading, I offer here a translation of Hebrews 4.5–11 with more explicit reference to the acting participants that will serve as a summary for my reading of the remaining verses:

5 Also in this again: “You shall never enter my rest.” 6 Therefore, since it remains for some to enter into it [i.e., rest], and those who first heard the good news did not enter because of unbelief, 7 [the Spirit] again appointed a certain day “today,” speaking much later in David,⁶⁹ just as he said before:

“Today if you hear his voice,
do not harden your hearts.”

8 For if Joshua had given them rest, then [the Spirit] would not have spoken about another later day. 9 So then a Sabbath rest remains for the people of God. 10 For the one who entered into his rest also rests from his works, just as God did from his own.⁷⁰ 11 Therefore, let us make every effort to enter into that rest so that no one falls into their example of disobedience.

This translation, while not an argument in itself, demonstrates the plausibility of reading the Spirit as the primary divine agent throughout this text both at a

⁶⁸ This adopts the assumption of many modern interpreters that the author takes no issue with God speaking about himself in the third person (e.g., Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 247).

⁶⁹ Those who think that the reference to the Spirit appeals to his role in the production of Scripture actually damage their case by severing the link between the Spirit and the later quotations of Psalm 94 since 4.7 refers to the words within their scriptural context; however, this reading is only plausible if the Spirit is the agent in view throughout Hebrews 3–4.

⁷⁰ This translation intentionally allows for a christological reading of Hebrews 4.10, which seems preferable. For a defense of this reading, see Nicholas J. Moore, “Jesus as ‘the One Who Entered His Rest’: The Christological Reading of Hebrews 4.10,” *JSNT* 36.4 (2014): 383–400. The explicit use of ὁ θεός in this verse to refer to God resting from his works may also support my pneumatological reading of the passage as a whole.

grammatical and basic syntactical level. What we have not been able to incorporate into the discussion thus far is the underlying “journeying” or “pilgrimage” motif.

This motif, operating in the background for much of Hebrews, envisions the contemporary community as a new iteration of the wilderness generation. They move toward their goal through the wilderness. The author may be drawing upon the original wilderness community in order to import a surplus of meaning into his reading of Psalm 95. When we discussed the psalm citation itself (§4.1.1), we noted several connections between the past and present communities: both see God’s works; both have tested or have the potential to test God; and both are in the same ancestral line (albeit metaphorically). Another feature of the original wilderness journey is YHWH’s guidance via the pillar of cloud and fire. Day and night this divine manifestation led the people. This pillar is linked with YHWH, who is said to be “in” (ἐν) the pillar (Exod 13.21–22; Num 14.14; cf. 9.15–23).⁷¹ Outside the Pentateuch, other associations appear. In Wisdom of Solomon, Sophia is the one who guides the Israelites:

She guided them along a marvelous way,
and became a shelter to them by day,
and a starry flame through the night. (Wis 10.17)

In Greek Isaiah 63, also discussed above, the Spirit is identified as the Israelites’ guide:

11 Where is the one who put his Holy Spirit among them,
who led Moses by the right hand?...
13 He [YHWH] led them through the deep like a horse through the
wilderness, and they did not grow weary.
14 And like cattle through the plain,
the Spirit of the Lord came down and guided them.
In this way, you led your people
in order to make a glorious name for yourself.

⁷¹ At times the pillar where the Lord is may be separate as it “descends” (Exod 33.9; Num 12.5) or “appears” (Deut 31.15).

The original wilderness generation was marked by the presence of YHWH. They not only witnessed his works, but also had a visible reminder that he, more specifically his Spirit, was in their midst.

The author of Hebrews also portrays the Holy Spirit in the midst of contemporary community. Outside Hebrews 3–4, the Spirit is a mark of new covenant life. God testifies to the “great salvation” through the Spirit (2.4), and those who are a part of this salvation are those who have been enlightened, tasted the heavenly gift, and shared in the Holy Spirit (among other things; 6.4). While these verses highlight the role of the Spirit in the individual’s life (through a shared experience), the author’s utilization of the journeying motif emphasizes the communal experience of the Spirit as the guide. Through the motif’s visible, outward dimension, the Spirit led the people as a whole. Similarly, the speech of the Spirit is addressed to the group (e.g., 3.7: ἀκούσητε; cf. 10.15). It is a singular message that the author portrays as an audible, concrete, and universal word to each *and* every one of its readers. This is perhaps the most important function of the Spirit’s speech in Hebrews. It reminds the contemporary community that God dwells and speaks among them.

4.1.4. Summary

The author of Hebrews presents the Spirit as the speaker of Greek Psalm 94.7–11. With this passage he offers a promise and a warning to the contemporary community: *continue striving to enter rest, or you will perish like your ancestors*. In presenting him as the speaker of this quotation through prosopological exegesis, the author expands his characterization of the Spirit as one who was present among the wilderness community and who responds to disobedience. This portrayal is

supported by a number of Jewish and Christian parallels, among which the most noteworthy is Isaiah 63. The author has identified the Spirit as speaker “in accordance with the Scriptures.”

This focus on the Spirit’s reminder of God’s presence among the community, particularly through his speech, leads directly into the author’s description of the “word of God.” This word remains “alive and effective” (ζῶν καὶ ἐνεργής); it penetrates (διῆκνεῖται) and is able to judge (κριτικός) a person’s inmost thoughts and feelings (4.12–13). Although the immediate context suggests that this applies to the words of Psalm 94, since this discussion of the word appears in the major transition between the first two major sections of Hebrews, this may also be a summary statement about all of the divine discourse that we have heard thus far. The Spirit speaks to the community directly, but the revelations about who Jesus is and what he does on their behalf also are effective. They “lay bare” misunderstandings about their new group identity. It is likewise appropriate for the author to transition into his description of Jesus, the great high priest, as the one who can “empathize with our weaknesses.” Just as he went before the wilderness generation, he goes before the contemporary community.

4.2. Hebrews 10.15–18: The Spirit and the Promise of Forgiveness

Much like the first speech cycle, which concludes with the author’s discussion of the Spirit’s speech (“Today if you hear his voice...”) in Hebrews 3.7–4.11, the second speech cycle closes with the Spirit’s speech also. Shortly after the transition in 4.11–16, the Father speaks again. First, he confirms Christ’s role as high priest in Hebrews 5.5–6 by quoting Greek Psalms 2.7 (“You are my Son...”) and 109.4

(“You are a priest forever...”). Then, he speaks about the new covenant that is to come, quoting Greek Jeremiah 38.31–34 (“Behold, the days are coming...”).

Both speeches enable the quotation by the Spirit in Hebrews 10.16–17. First, the Father’s announcement of the new covenant is repeated here, but in another form. The first new covenant speech is not direct address as such (8.8–12), but the author clearly connects this revelation to the Son. In the introduction, he shows again how the Father has enabled the new covenant work of the son; he has appointed him (8.3), set up the sanctuary where he serves (8.2), and given him a superior ministry (8.6). Within the Son’s speech in this cycle (10.5–7), he reveals yet another way that the Father enables his ministry—through the preparation of his “body” (10.5). In that body, Christ enters the world with his divine purpose in mind; with the words of Greek Psalm 39.7–9, he tells the Father: “I have come to do your will” (10.7). The Son desires to participate in the Father’s plan for perfecting those who draw near. This is testified to “us,” the author says, by the Spirit (10.16–17). With his re-citation of Jeremiah 38.33–34, the Spirit reiterates the promises of the new covenant declaration to the community. The words selected likely represent the “better promises” on which the new covenant is built.⁷² The author once again ties the Spirit to the community through having him testify to the impact of God’s installation of the new covenant. This section will examine the text-form of the quotation of Jeremiah 38.33–34 of Hebrews 10.16–17, focusing especially on the way it differs from the quotation of the same passage in Hebrews 8.8–12; then it will discuss the passage as a whole with a particular focus on the contribution it has to the author of Hebrews’ characterization of the Holy Spirit.

⁷² Attridge, “The Uses of Antithesis in Hebrews 8–10,” 6.

4.2.1. Text-form of Greek Jeremiah 38.33–34

As we have seen, the text of Jeremiah 38.31–34 in Hebrews 8 differs substantially from the LXX. In Hebrews 10.16–17, the author alters the text of Jeremiah 38.31–34 again, moving further still from the LXX, and although some of the changes are relatively insignificant, the fact remains that around a quarter of the words differ in this second quotation.⁷³

Hebrews 8	Hebrews 10
10 ὅτι αὕτη ἡ διαθήκη, ἣν διαθήσομαι <u>τῷ οἴκῳ Ἰσραὴλ</u> μετὰ τὰς ἡμέρας ἐκεῖνας, λέγει κύριος· διδούς νόμους μου εἰς <u>τὴν διάνοιαν</u> αὐτῶν καὶ ἐπὶ <u>καρδίας</u> αὐτῶν ἐπιγράψω αὐτούς...	16 αὕτη ἡ διαθήκη ἣν διαθήσομαι <u>πρὸς αὐτοὺς</u> μετὰ τὰς ἡμέρας ἐκεῖνας, λέγει κύριος· διδούς νόμους μου ἐπὶ <u>καρδίας</u> αὐτῶν καὶ ἐπὶ <u>τὴν διάνοιαν</u> αὐτῶν ἐπιγράψω αὐτούς,
12 καὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν οὐ μὴ <u>μνησθῶ</u> ἔτι.	17 καὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν <u>καὶ τῶν ἁνομιῶν αὐτῶν</u> οὐ μὴ <u>μνησθήσομαι</u> ἔτι.

The variations between these texts then are:

- (1) “With the house of Israel” (τῷ οἴκῳ Ἰσραὴλ) reads “with them” (πρὸς αὐτούς).
- (2) “On their mind” (εἰς τὴν διάνοιαν αὐτῶν) and “on their hearts” (ἐπὶ καρδίας αὐτῶν) are transposed.
- (3) “And their lawless deeds” (καὶ τῶν ἁνομιῶν αὐτῶν) is added.
- (4) “Will never recall” (οὐ μὴ μνησθῶ) reads “will never recall” (οὐ μὴ μνησθήσομαι).

Since these differences are only attested in later commentaries and translations, these alterations should also be attributed to the author of Hebrews. My previous conclusions about the author intentionally altering his base text are indirectly supported by the second quotation of the text in Hebrews 10. Even when he presents a text as the words of God himself, he takes little issue with emending his base text.

⁷³ This figure (lit. 9 of 40 words) accounts for additions, but not omissions.

Upon concluding that these alterations are indeed the author's,⁷⁴ a question emerges: why?

(1) The first alteration, changing “house of Israel” to “them,” could serve a preference for avoiding ethnic language for God's people.⁷⁵ Rather than speaking of “Israel” or “non-Israel,” he more commonly uses familial designations, such as “ancestors” (1.1; 2.16; 3.9; 8.9), to connect the prior and current peoples to one another.⁷⁶ Thus he removes ethnic (or “national”) language to make clear that the promise is to the community (broadly conceived), even if they do not immediately include themselves within ethnic Israel.⁷⁷ (2) The rationale behind the second variation (transposing “hearts” and “mind”) is not clear. The author may desire to show that the two are interchangeable;⁷⁸ he may, as Kenneth J. Thomas and Simon Kistemaker suggest, desire to associate the Law and the heart more closely;⁷⁹ or he

⁷⁴ Attridge, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 281; Cockerill, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 57–58; deSilva, *Perseverance in Gratitude*, 325–26; Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 513–14; Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, 268; Koester, *Hebrews*, 435–36; Guthrie, “Hebrews,” 978–79.

⁷⁵ The *purpose* is not to “denationalize” the text (as suggested by Herbert Braun, *An die Hebräer*, HNT 14 [Tübingen: Mohr, 1984], 304), but that is the *result* (*contra* Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 513). The author's preference for familial, over ethnic, language is a significant difference from Paul (see esp. Rom 9–11).

⁷⁶ The description of the people as the “offspring of Abraham” in 2.16 could be seen as ethnic language; however, this highlights the familial quality of the connection. The primary exception to my claim is the presence of “house and Israel” and “house of Judah” in the initial quotation. This is arguably a historical designation referring to the previous recipients, which the author obscures slightly in the second quotation of Jeremiah 38.

⁷⁷ Attridge, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 281; Cockerill, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 456; Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 513; Kenneth J. Thomas, “Old Testament Citations in Hebrews,” *NTS* 11.4 (1965): 311.

⁷⁸ Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, 268.

⁷⁹ Simon Kistemaker, *The Psalm Citations in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2010), 129; Thomas, “Old Testament Citations in Hebrews,” 311. Following Kistemaker, Thomas points to the author's discussion of the “failure” of the Law (Heb 9–10) and the heart (Heb 3–4), which the author now desires to remedy; however, neither of these aspects of the old covenant is critiqued in its own right. The Law, particularly in the chapters he cites, is used as the standard for old covenant practice. Those rites are carried out “according to the Law” (κατὰ νόμον). Indeed, the Law is a “shadow” of the “coming good things,” but this suggests a negative assessment is only positive when the comparison with the “realities” (ἡ εἰκὼν τῶν πραγμάτων) is in view. Further, the author does not critique the heart, but the act of “hardening” one's heart.

may highlight the “heart” by bringing it forward because it is his preferred term for the internal dimension(s) of a person.⁸⁰

(3) The third variation, the addition of καὶ τῶν ἀνομιῶν αὐτῶν, is sometimes thought to be a variation on the clause, “I will be merciful toward their unjust deeds” (ὅτι ἴλεως ἔσομαι ταῖς ἀδικίαις αὐτῶν), which is found in the quotation of Jeremiah 38.34 in Hebrews 8.12,⁸¹ and other times is thought to add emphasis on the “promise”⁸² or “the scope of God’s grace.”⁸³ If the author’s aim is to add emphasis to God’s promise and/or grace, then it does seem somewhat strange that he did not simply quote all of Jeremiah 38.34—God’s grace would indeed be emphasized by a reference to his mercy. But perhaps the author has a particular dimension or occasion of God’s grace in mind.⁸⁴ The author may have altered his text to add another allusion to Scripture—an interpretive move that he also seems to have undertaken by introducing Jeremiah 41 as a lens through which to read Jeremiah 38.31–24 in Hebrews 8.8–12 (see §2.3). The combination of “sins and lawless deeds” as a double object (τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν καὶ τῶν ἀνομιῶν αὐτῶν) occurs only twice in the canonical Greek text: in Exodus 34.9 and in 2 Esdras 19.2 (Neh 9.2).⁸⁵

⁸⁰ Καρδία occurs eleven times in Hebrews. Six occurrences appear within quotations (3.8; 3.10; 3.15; 4.7; 8.10; 10.16), and the five other occurrences appear in the immediate context of the quotations or the exhortation just after. In contrast, διάνοια appears only within the author’s quotations of Jeremiah 38.

⁸¹ This “[achieves] rhythm and assonance between the *kai tōn hamartiōn autōn* and the *kai tōn anomiōn autōn*” (Guthrie, “Hebrews,” 979). Compare also Cockerill, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 458, whose stance is somewhat difficult to discern.

⁸² Attridge, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 281.

⁸³ Koester, *Hebrews*, 436.

⁸⁴ Here the author perfects the “superabundance” and “singularity” of grace (see John M. G. Barclay, *Paul and the Gift* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015], 70–71).

⁸⁵ Though “double accusative” is the more widespread terminology, μνησκόμαι typically takes its object in the genitive.

Hebrews 10

17 καὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν καὶ τῶν
ἀνομιῶν αὐτῶν οὐ μὴ μνησθήσομαι ἔτι.

Exodus 34.9

καὶ ἀφελεῖς [κύριε] σὺ τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν
καὶ τὰς ἀνομίας ἡμῶν, καὶ ἐσόμεθα σοί.

2 Esdras 19.2 (Neh 9.2)

οἱ υἱοὶ Ἰσραὴλ...ἐξηγόρευσαν τὰς ἁμαρτίας
αὐτῶν καὶ τὰς ἀνομίας τῶν πατέρων
αὐτῶν.

The first quotation from Exodus 34.9 mirrors the language from Exodus 34.6–7,⁸⁶ a passage sometimes referred to in Jewish literature as the “Thirteen Attributes of Mercy” (*Shelosh Esre Middot*).⁸⁷ In this episode, YHWH renews his relationship with the Israelites, but only after his initial reaction—to destroy them completely—is tempered through the course of his conversation with Moses. God’s response to this flagrant disobedience is extraordinary; in the face of their idolatry, he promises to be exceedingly merciful (Exod 34.6–7), but a warning remains: “he will not acquit the guilty” (34.7: οὐ καθαριεῖ τὸν ἔνοχον). Paul also pairs Jeremiah 31 and Exodus 34 in 2 Corinthians 3, and the combination is sometimes traced to Jewish liturgical traditions.⁸⁸

The second passage also appeals to the Golden Calf, but offers a reading of this key moment in God’s relationship with his people. After reconstructing the temple, the people begin to recommit themselves to the covenant (see esp. 2 Esd 9.1–10.39); however, they begin with confession (9.1–5), which leads into a prayer

⁸⁶ “The Lord our God...who takes away lawless and unjust deeds and sins [ἁφαιρῶν ἀνομίας καὶ ἀδικίας καὶ ἁμαρτίας]...”

⁸⁷ See, e.g., b. *Rosh HaShanah* 17b.

⁸⁸ On the pairing of these texts in 2 Corinthians, see Michael Cover, *Lifting the Veil: 2 Corinthians 3:7–18 in Light of Jewish Homiletic and Commentary Traditions*, BNZW (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015), 250–51. On the use of the passages within Jewish liturgical cycle, see Gabriella Gelardini, “Hebrews, an Ancient Synagogue Homily for ‘Tisha Be-Av’: Its Function, Its Basis, Its Theological Interpretation,” in *Hebrews: Contemporary Methods, New Insights*, ed. Gabriella Gelardini, *Biblical Interpretation* 75 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 107–27.

about God’s faithfulness, particularly in the wilderness. When the Levites recall the Golden Calf in their prayer, they allude to Exodus 34.6–7, “You are a merciful and compassionate God, slow to anger and rich in mercy, and you did not abandon them” (σὺ θεὸς ἐλεήμων καὶ οἰκτίρμων, μακρόθυμος καὶ πολυέλεος, καὶ οὐκ ἐγκατέλιπες αὐτούς). Though the link between Exodus 34 and Hebrews 10 is stronger, 2 Esdras 19 attests the tradition noted above where the Spirit is present among the community, perhaps even as the pillar of cloud and fire (19.12, 19–20).⁸⁹ This passage also serves to highlight the human dimension of covenant renewal through the corporate confession of the people. Rather than intending to introduce strong discontinuity (see §2.3), both of these possible inter-texts suggest that the author has a stronger focus on continuity in mind. This is a “new” (or “renewed”) covenant that is unlike the prior, but even the first covenant offers the hope of forgiveness—though not the promise of perfection.

(4) The fourth variation is primarily one of Greek verb tense. The quotation in Jeremiah 38.34 and in Hebrews 8.12 has the aorist subjunctive of μὴ μνησκόμην (μνησθῶ) accompanied by the double negation οὐ μή, whereas the verb in Hebrews 10.17 is the future indicative (μνησθήσονται). When discussing future prohibitions, many Greek grammars (in abstract) present these options as though they are equal or nearly synonymous choices for expressing the same idea,⁹⁰ and while it is true that these forms often occur in similar instances, the author of Hebrews’ deliberate

⁸⁹ This arguably also fits the author’s pattern of reading a pentateuchal event through the lens of a prophetic or canonically later text. Most notable is the prioritization of Greek Psalm 109 rather than Genesis 14 when discussing Melchizedek, but consider also the prioritization of Psalm 94 over Numbers 14. To the contrary, if the link between Exodus 34 and Jeremiah 38[31 MT] was even more substantial in the first century, then Jeremiah 38 may be the prioritized prophetic text.

⁹⁰ For example, Blass and Debrunner, *BDF*, sec. 365; Constantine R. Campbell, *Verbal Aspect and Non-Indicative Verbs: Further Soundings in the Greek of the New Testament* (New York: Peter Lang, 2008), 57–60; C. F. D. Moule, *An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 21–22; Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 468–69.

change to this verse may suggest that, for him, some subtle difference between the two grammatical options exists.⁹¹ One possible hint about the first-century distinction is the pairing of οὐ μή with the aorist subjunctive in contexts where a degree of contingency exists. In around two-thirds of the occurrences of this construction, the speaker or author is making a claim about what will happen at a certain time or *if* something else takes place.⁹² Conversely, the future indicative less often is qualified in such a way, though still around half the time.⁹³ This distinction clearly is not strict within the New Testament, but the author of Hebrews makes it, likely in order to emphasize just how certain this promise really is. It, according to Harold Attridge, “not only confirms the permanence of the ‘perfection’ that Christ has wrought for his followers...[but] also helps to define that perfection and the ‘sanctification’ that it involves.”⁹⁴

4.2.2. Hebrews 10.16–17: The Spirit Testifies to Us

With these alterations by the author in mind, let us turn to the content of the quotation. The claim that his alterations have a deliberate theological aim raises a key question about the relationship between the author’s two quotations: if these adjustments better serve the author’s argument, then why does he not make them in the prior quotation also? It is sensible to conclude, perhaps, that he is in the process

⁹¹ This is particularly so since the οὐ μή with the aorist subjunctive occurs around twice as many times as οὐ μή with the future indicative in the New Testament.

⁹² This is based on my search for verses with the construction in question accompanied by one of the following: μέχρι, ἕως, εἰ, or ἕαν. Those occurrences yield a near majority, which when paired with verses where the author/speaker says, “Whoever [x] will absolutely not [y]” (Matt 5.42; 10.42; Mark 9.41; 10.15; Luke 18.17; John 6.35, 37; 8.12; 8.51–52; 11.26; 1 Pet 2.6 Rev 2.11; also similar Rom 4.8; Gal 5.16), as well as with verses where the speaker/author has a distinct context in mind not signaled by one of the named conjunctions or prepositions (Mark 16.18; Luke 6.37; 1 Thess 4.15; 5.3; 2 Pet 1.10; Rev 3.12; Rev 18.21–23), led to the figure above.

⁹³ Exceptions are only found within Peter’s reported speech (Matt 16.22; 26.35; Mark 14.31) and Johannine literature (John 4.14; 6.35; 20.25; Rev 3.5; 9.6).

⁹⁴ Attridge, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 281.

of developing themes, especially forgiveness, and prefers to bring it to the foreground slowly. Indeed, this theme begins as a whisper within the author's quotation of Jeremiah 38 when he brings this text into conversation with Jeremiah 41 and its covenant of "release"; it reaches its apex at the close of the second quotation: "where there is forgiveness of these, sacrifice for sins is no more" (10.18). Even so, if the development of this theme accounts for the variation, the author still places some relative distance between the two quotations by altering the text. In the two other instances where the author repeats a citation, the two texts are identical. First, in Hebrews 3–4 when the author quotes Psalm 94.7–11, he repeats portions of the text at regular intervals through the two chapters. Even though the author makes a broad range of points with this text, which sometimes would be well-served by a minor alteration, the form remains static. Second, when the author repeats his quotation of Psalm 2.7 in Hebrews 5.5 (cf. 1.5), the form remains the same, and the author even appears to point backward to the first instance when the Father spoke the text to the Son (see §2.2.1). On the contrary, in Hebrews 8 and 10, with the two quotations of Jeremiah 38, two speakers speak two distinct text-forms.

Nevertheless, the claims recounted above that the Spirit speaks only through Scripture or as its source are also found in interpretations of this passage.⁹⁵ An additional factor raised against the Spirit's distinct agency is the fact that this could be perceived as a mere repetition of the Father's words found in Hebrew 8.⁹⁶ At first

⁹⁵ "That Christ's sacrifice provides perpetual perfection and sanctification is confirmed by scripture, whose author, the 'holy spirit,' speaking through Jeremiah, 'bears witness' (μαρτυρεῖ)" (Attridge, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 281). Also, "The present tense of the verb... is significant; it indicates that *through the quotation* of the prophetic oracle the Holy Spirit is speaking now" (emphasis added; Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, 268).

⁹⁶ "The Holy Spirit is also explicitly said to speak scriptural words (3:7–11; 10.16–17), but this figure is indistinguishable from God (...see 8:10, 12, where "God" [8.8] is the speaker of the words attributed in 10:16–17 to the Holy Spirit)" (David M. Moffitt, "The Interpretation of Scripture in the Epistle to the Hebrews," in *Reading the Epistle to the Hebrews: A Resource for Students*, ed. Eric F. Mason and Kevin B. McCrudden, Resources for Biblical Study 66 [Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011], 84). "The Holy Spirit does not speak apart from god, but rather speaks in

glance, the fact that the Father speaks this portion of text before the Spirit may indeed cast doubt on his distinct role as a speaker of Scripture—perhaps the author merely implies that the Spirit testifies God’s words through their written form. But this possibility does not take into account the degree of difference between the two quotations. The text-form is emended; an additional inter-text (Exod 34.9) is introduced; and the main point communicated by the quotation is changed. The base text is indeed the same, but the interpretations are not. Elsewhere the author uses another text for both a positive and negative purpose. As we have seen (§4.1), Psalm 94.7–11 first is used to demonstrate the catastrophic effects of “falling away” (3.12–19), then second is used to offer hope to the current community that the promise to enter rest still remains (4.1–11); however, while both facets of the author’s interpretation of Psalm 94 are connected to the contemporary audience,⁹⁷ this is not the case with both facets of the use of Jeremiah 38.

Despite the author’s frequent appeal to the audience elsewhere, after the recapitulation of key points in 8.1, his hortatory remarks are sparse until the transition before the second quotation (i.e., 10.10).⁹⁸ But as the author transitions between the Son’s and the Spirit’s speech, he turns his attention to the audience, connecting sanctification and perfection as two corresponding results of Christ’s offering. The effects of his sacrifice are what the Spirit “testifies to us” through his own re-citation of Jeremiah 38. By introducing this second speaker, the author highlights the separate functions of the two quotations of Jeremiah, which by

tandem with him; indeed both texts that the Holy Spirit speaks (3.7, 10.15) are also spoken by God...” (Allen, “The Forgotten Spirit,” 54–55).

⁹⁷ “Pay attention, brothers and sisters, lest anyone among you has an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God” (3.12). “Therefore, since a promise to enter his rest still remains, let us be cautious so that no one among be considered to have fallen short” (4.1).

⁹⁸ In addition to the third person references to the “people” within the quotation, exceptions are 9.13–15, 9.24;

extension illustrates that the author has distinct functions for each of his divine speakers; the Spirit is the speaker who addresses the community.⁹⁹ His message to “us” pertains to the effective cleansing of Christ’s self-offering (10.14–15). This covenant’s laws will be internalized, and the sins and lawless deeds of covenant participants he will recall no more. The forgiveness offered by this promise renders any further cultic offerings unnecessary. They are fully cleansed, and the reminder of their sins is also no more (cf. 10.2–3). With the inter-text of Exodus 34 in mind also, this efficacious forgiveness is also exceptional in its provision of mercy even for the most brazen disobedience.

As we have seen, the first two major sections of Hebrews each end with a significant transition or “hinge” section. The first in Hebrews 4.11–16 encourages the audience to act in light of the author’s discourse about the promised rest and also remarks on the impact of God’s word. The second 10.19–25 likewise encourages them to draw near to God because they are perfected and forgiven. What these two sections have in common, apart from their significant contribution to Hebrews’ structure, is their proximity to the speech of the Holy Spirit. His direct speech to the community is logically connected to the author’s exhortation. Within Hebrews 10.19–25, the role of each divine participant is implicitly recounted as the author urges his community to action on the basis of their speech. Due to the Spirit’s communication of the new covenant promise of the effective cleansing of Christ’s offering, they have confidence (10.19–20) and a great high priest (10.21), which allows them to draw near to God (10.22). These confidences also should lead to continued good deeds and community participation (10.24–25). The speech of Father, Son, and Spirit all culminates here in Hebrews 10.19–25, but it is the

⁹⁹ Levison, “Theology of the Spirit in Hebrews,” 98, 100.

encouragement of the Spirit's speech that leads most naturally into the author's major hortatory transitions.

4.3. Conclusion

In Hebrews 3.7–4.11 and 10.15–18, the author distinctly portrays the Spirit as the speaker who addresses the community through his use of prosopological exegesis. It is by no means the case that the speech of Father and Son to one another is of no consequence because it is not directly spoken to the people; rather in the author's schema, their intra-divine discourse is overheard, and its most salient details are relayed by the Holy Spirit. In addition to discussing the effects of portraying the Spirit as the speaker of these two Jewish texts (Ps 94.7–11; Jer 38.33–34), this chapter seeks to correct the misconception that the Spirit does not speak in the same way as the Father and Son and by extension is not a distinct agent in the Epistle to the Hebrews. The Spirit's speech is introduced with the same type of formula as the Father's and the Son's; the Spirit's speech relies on prosopological exegesis, and thus a fresh reading of the base text; and the Spirit's speech has a distinct function within Hebrews as the message of God to the contemporary community. The author's first quotation by the Spirit grounds his extended discourse on the connection of the present audience to the first wilderness generation—the “ancestors.” This reading of Psalm 94 warns and encourages the addressees while also placing them within the wilderness on their own spiritual journey. The second quotation testifies to the community that God's new covenant is indeed gospel—“good news”—because it will effectively rid them of their guilt and their need to offer sacrifices year after year. When the Holy Spirit testifies and speaks, it is “for us” “today.”

5. Divine Discourse and the Structure of Hebrews

The primary speaker in the Epistle to the Hebrews is God. The Father, Son, and Spirit each speak, and each advances the argument of Hebrews as their speech grounds the author's strongest claims. These speeches appear in a patterned order (Father, Son, Spirit), and each character has a "voice," which the author can craft by means of his prosopological reading strategy. But how do the author's patterns relate to other proposals about the structure of Hebrews? Do the occurrences of speech run in tandem with other devices that the author uses to mark major shifts in his argument? This chapter will explore two of the most noteworthy structural proposals offered for the Epistle to the Hebrews and show that one proposal in particular, one that shows Hebrews to be one letter in three sections, is to be preferred. This will begin with an introduction to that secondary literature and then proceed to a discussion of how each section progresses as a whole. This offers a development from the previous chapters on speech, as typically the speech of the Father was related to the speech of the Father. This chapter imagines the conversation as a whole in each section of Hebrews. After the relatively straightforward summaries of the material in the first two sections—that which also appears in the previous chapters—I will move into a discussion of the author's quotations in the third section. There no discernible pattern is present, but several key points of connection between speech in this section and speech in the first two sections are. Finally, this

chapter will conclude with a brief discussion about some questions that this study leaves unanswered.

The last century witnessed a renewed interest in the literary structure of Hebrews. In this advanced composition, no clear divisions in the subject matter are present; instead, the author moves back and forth among several topics bringing them to prominence and then sending them back into the shadows of the discourse. Dissatisfied by the growing agnostic approach among their colleagues, several scholars in the twentieth century asked: Can the theology of Hebrews really be properly understood without knowledge of the author's intended structure?¹ After all, surely the structure reveals the author's overall purpose. Perhaps of equal importance is the neglected counter-question: can the structure of Hebrews be properly understood without knowledge of the author's theology? It is my contention that proposals regarding the structure or the theology should remain in a dialectic relationship where each component must be evaluated in terms of its faithfulness to the other. This section will show how one popular structural proposal both aids and is aided by an examination of Hebrews' divine discourse.

5.1. Previous Structural Proposals

Two proposals from the twentieth century tend to be favored in twenty-first century studies: (1) the five-part proposal of Albert Vanhoye² (dependent upon the prior work of F. Thien³ and Léon Vaganay⁴) and (2) the three-part proposal of Wolfgang

¹ George H. Guthrie asks a series of similar questions in his monograph on this topic. See *The Structure of Hebrews: A Text-Linguistic Analysis*, NovTSup 73 (Leiden: Brill, 1994), xvii–xviii.

² *La structure littéraire de l'Épître aux Hébreux*, StudNeot 1 (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1963); "Discussions sur la structure de l'Épître aux Hébreux," *Bib* 55, no. 3 (1974): 349–80.

³ "Analyse de L'Épître aux Hébreux," *Revue Biblique* 11 (1902): 74–86.

⁴ "Le plan de l'Épître aux Hébreux," in *Mémorial Lagrange* (J. Gabalda, 1940), 269–77.

Nauck⁵ (dependent upon the prior work of Otto Michel⁶). A contribution developed out of the latter is the recognition that at two significant transitions in the discourse, the author develops an A-B-C-C'-B'-A' parallel that draws the two sections together:⁷

4.11	Let us make every effort to enter that rest. Σπουδάσωμεν...εἰσελθεῖν εἰς ἐκείνην τὴν κατάπαυσιν	10.22	Let us approach with true hearts. προσερχώμεθα μετὰ ἀληθινῆς καρδίας
4.14	Let us hold fast to the confession κρατῶμεν τῆς ὁμολογίας	10.23	Let us hold fast to the confession of hold without wavering κατέχωμεν τὴν ὁμολογίαν τῆς ἐλπίδος ἀκλινῇ
4.16	Let us approach the throne of grace with confidence προσερχώμεθα...μετὰ παρρησίας τῷ θρόνῳ τῆς χάριτος	10.24	Let us consider how to spur one another to love and good works. κατανοῶμεν ἀλλήλους εἰς παροξυσμὸν ἀγάπης καὶ καλῶν ἔργων

These two sections are not only parallel to one another, but their three-part exhortations serve as a marked call to response in the midst of the author's argument. Nauck used these sections to introduce the next major parts, but recent proposals, such as that of Cynthia Westfall, have rightly noted that they serve both as the conclusion to what precedes and as the introduction to what follows.⁸ In other words, these two sections are the hinges for the structure of Hebrews.

⁵ "Zum Aufbau des Hebräerbriefes." For the tripartite scheme, Heinrich Bullinger is the earliest proponent that I have seen. For an outline of his proposal, see Kenneth Hagen, *Hebrews Commenting from Erasmus to Bèze, 1516–1598*, BGBE 23 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1981).

⁶ *Der Brief an die Hebräer*, 10th ed., KEK 13 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1957), 372.

⁷ Extending the sections slightly to 4.11–16 and 10.19–25 offers a more convincing proposal (Cynthia Long Westfall, *A Discourse Analysis of the Letter to the Hebrews: The Relationship Between Form and Meaning*, LNTS 297 [London: Bloomsbury, 2006], 136–37).

⁸ The most thorough of these proposals is Westfall, 136–37. Cf. Guthrie, *The Structure of Hebrews*, 102–4; Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, xcvi.

The resulting outline consists of:

(I) Hebrews 1.1–4.16

[Hinge Section: Hebrews 4.11–16]

(II) Hebrews 4.11–10.25

[Hinge Section: Hebrews 10:19–25]

(III) Hebrews 10.19–13.25 (with a benediction from 13.20–25)

Even if further subsections are created, this primary structure for Hebrews seems most convincing.⁹

In contrast to this proposal is the five-part structure of Vanhoye, which is not without merit. Vanhoye highlights several literary features of the text, such as “hook words” (mot-crochet), genre, and *inclusios* among other elements, which are indeed key to the understanding the author’s composition; however, he misjudges the importance of the author’s constructed parallels between Hebrews 4.11–16 and 10.19–25, despite access to Nauck’s preliminary outline.¹⁰ Vanhoye not only situates these sections within the middle of his larger sections II (3.1–5.10) and III (5.11–10.39), but also places a minor division between 4.14 and 4.15 despite the explanatory γάρ and its conceptual dependence upon 4.14.¹¹

When the tripartite structural proposal is brought to bear on divine discourse in Hebrews, another pattern emerges.¹² Within the first and second main sections of

⁹ Some proponents of a tripartite structure are: Cockerill, *Epistle to the Hebrews*; Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*; Michel, *Der Brief an die Hebräer*; Thompson, *Hebrews*; Weiß, *Der Brief an die Hebräer*.

¹⁰ Vanhoye addresses Nauck’s proposal “Zum Aufbau des Hebräerbriefes,” esp. 203–4. in the introduction to his monograph: “A cette fin, il invoque des rapprochements littéraires, mais il le fait de façon si partielle qu’on ne peut guère parler de démonstration. Disons, pour prendre le principe exemple, que quelques ressemblances relevées entre 4,14 et 10,19–22 ne suffisent nullement à établir que 4,14 et 10,31 forment les limites d’un développement” (*La structure littéraire de l’Épître aux Hébreux*, 32).

¹¹ This is only one critique of Vanhoye’s structural outline. Others can likely be inferred from §5.2–5.3.

¹² Since the speech does not occur right at the boundaries of these sections, this is the case for any of the tripartite proposals represented in n. 9.

Hebrews, the divine participants all speak in the same order: Father, Son, Spirit. When each one of these participants speaks to a named addressee, they have a consistent conversation partner. Further, their speech consistently accomplishes a similar purpose. For example, the Father confirms the Son's unique position or authority. These consistencies are not coincidental, but instead, I think, should be regarded as intentional. With divine discourse the author moves his argument forward and characterizes his divine participants. The sections that follow will offer a brief summary of divine discourse as it contributes to the argument of Hebrews.

5.2. Divine Discourse in Hebrews 1.1–4.16

Just after the opening section (1.1–4), Hebrews presents the Father speaking to the Son through several Scripture citations in order to demonstrate the Son's superiority. Each of these citations distances him from the angels and from the singular human recipients who previously were thought to be addressed. It is with these texts that the author makes his superlative claims about the Son's life and work. Then, the author moves to a short paranetic section that functions as a hinge between 1.5–14 and 2.5–18. In it he reveals another reason for the comparison between the angels and Jesus: they represent the "old" and "new" covenants as mediators. Whereas chapter 1 deals primarily with the superiority of Jesus over the angels as the exalted Son,¹³ chapter 2 asserts that humanity will also enjoy this exalted status someday. In Hebrews 2.6–8, the author places Greek Psalm 8.5–7 on the lips of an anonymous human speaker

¹³ I agree with David Moffitt and others who contend that his humanity is also in view in chapter 1, but I think the focus is on Jesus as the only one who is fit to be addressed by the seven texts in 1.5–14, which in some cases is only loosely dependent upon his humanity (e.g., the texts in 1.5).

(“For somewhere someone solemnly testified, saying...”)¹⁴ and portrays the Son “tasting death on behalf of everyone” (ὕπὲρ παντὸς γεύσεται θανάτου, 2.9). The “son of man” (υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου, 2.6) in the Psalm 8 quotation provides the conceptual link for the author. These children (or “sons”) are “a little lower” than the angels, so their future exalted status must mean that they too are in the family of God. Thus, the Son calls them “brothers and sisters” (ἀδελφούς), which occurs in the his response to the Father. He first quotes Greek Psalm 21.23 and then Isaiah 8.17–18.

“I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters;
in the midst of the assembly, I will sing your praise.”
And again,
“I will place my trust in him.”
And again,
“See, I and the children God has given to me.” (Heb 2.12–13)

With these texts, the Son accepts his role in the salvation of his brothers and sisters. After this divine discourse, the author describes the Son’s full participation in humanity (2.14–18) and then his role as their apostle and priest—one superior to Moses (3.1–6), which leads into the Holy Spirit’s speech to the contemporary community. Through the text of Greek Psalm 94.7–11, the Spirit encourages them not to follow in the footsteps of those led by Moses, but to follow Jesus to rest: “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts...” The author repeats portions of this initial citation throughout Hebrews 3.7–4.11, using the text as an anchoring refrain. In the midst of his discussion, the Spirit calls out again and again. This extended discussion of Psalm 94 leads directly into the hinge section (4.11–16) that concludes this major section of Hebrews.

¹⁴ This introductory formula has often been used as proof that the author is either casual with his introductory formulas or has no interest in human speakers (see, e.g., Cockerill, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 127; Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, NIGTC [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993], 147–48; Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, 46), but by making this particular text anonymous and timeless, the author allows this person to speak of behalf of all humanity.

Thus in this first major division of Hebrews, each of the divine participants speaks. More importantly, their speech is integral to the author's argument. With the Father's speech, he confirms the unique status of the Son. With the Son's speech, he portrays the Son accepting his status and welcoming humanity into the family of God. With the Spirit's speech, he encourages the community, or the brothers and sisters, to follow Jesus to rest. If one removed the claims made with and through these citations in Hebrews 1.1–4.16, then only a fraction of the text would remain.

5.3. Divine Discourse in Hebrews 4.11–10.25

After the transitional paranetic section in 4.11–16, the second major section of Hebrews proceeds to a discussion of the appointment and qualifications of priests (5.1–10). In this section, the Father speaks first again. In Hebrews 5.5 he repeats (or the author recalls) his announcement of Psalm 2.7, then for the first time in Hebrews, he speaks Greek Psalm 109.4: "You are a priest forever in the likeness of Melchizedek." After this speech, where the Father declares Jesus fit for the priesthood, the author expands upon Jesus' virtue. He was obedient in suffering and became the cause of eternal salvation (5.8–9). This portrait of Jesus as the ideal learner, the obedient child (or student), leads the author to his portrayal of the audience as sluggish, perhaps even disobedient, children. Despite all that they have experienced (6.4–8; compare 2.1–4), they are still not ready to move beyond elementary teaching (5.11–14).¹⁵ The author confirms God's good intentions for them in Hebrews 6.13–20 through the example of Abraham, which provides the

¹⁵ This reading assumes that Hebrews 6.1–20 is not a digression (though 5.11–14 is). See Ron Guzmán and Michael W. Martin, "Is Hebrews 5:11–6:20 Really a Digression?," *NovT* 57.3 (2015): 295–310.

perfect segue to his discussion of Abraham's (and his Levitical offspring's) inferiority to Melchizedek (7.1–10). Throughout Hebrews 7.11–28, the Father's speech is repeated to anchor the argument. This high priest Jesus is superior because he remains in office "forever" (7.17) and was appointed by an oath (7.20–22):

The Lord has sworn
and will not change his mind:
"You are a priest forever."

It is not just the priest, the author explains, that is superior. The offerings (8.4), the sanctuary (8.5), and the covenant (8.6) are too. In order to further demonstrate this point, the author presents divine discourse again. This speech, presumably spoken by God but unaddressed, contains Jeremiah 38.31–34. This demonstrates that the "old" is not only inferior, but also growing obsolete. While elaborating on his comparison between the offerings, ceremonies, and sanctuaries (9.1–28), the author makes clear that the "old" had a necessary role. These elements of that covenant made clear that a need still existed (9.9). While in Hebrews 7 Jesus was portrayed as the superior priest, in Hebrews 10, he is the superior offering. The author depicts Jesus' speech when he enters the world:

Sacrifice and offering, you did not desire,
but a body you have prepared for me.
With whole burnt offerings and sin offerings,
you are not pleased.
Then I said, "See—
it is written about me in the scroll of the book—
I have come to do your will, O God. (10.5–7)

This superior offering is wholly efficacious. Its sufficiency is evidenced by the speech of the Holy Spirit. He "testifies to us," repeating a portion of Jeremiah 31.33–34, which closes:

Their sins and lawless deeds,
I will no longer remember [οὐ μὴ μνησθήσομαι ἔτι].

Like the Spirit's speech in 3.7–4.11, this quotation leads directly into the author's next transitional paranetic section. This fact highlights the Spirit's role as the divine participant most closely connected with the community.

To summarize: in the second main section of Hebrews, the divine participants speak again. The Father confirms that the Son is suitable for the priesthood (5.5). The author demonstrates throughout the sections that follow that Psalm 109.4 refers to the Son's priestly superiority. His priesthood stands within God's new covenant that he announces in Hebrews 8.8–12. In Hebrews 10.5–7, Christ enters the world offering himself to God, confirming his willingness to serve. Finally, the Spirit tells the community how this superior high priest and his superior offering provide a superior blessing: namely, this internal covenant offers true forgiveness. These two main sections of Hebrews exhibit a significant dependence upon divine discourse for their argument. Further, the consistent characterization of these divine participants begins to become clear. They all contribute to the argument of Hebrews as a whole, but each of them has a particular role to play. Without any one of the divine participants, the argument would fall flat. This, along with the pattern of speech (Father, Son, Spirit), suggests a deliberate effort on the part of the author in characterizing them.

5.4. Divine (and Human) Discourse in Hebrews 10.19–13.25

In classical musical compositions, a composer develops a theme, typically a phrase of music, that repeats at regular intervals throughout the piece. This gives the piece its own recognizable character and offers listeners an anchor to the progression. After establishing a theme, a composer often introduces variations. At this point, the alteration of the theme is noticeable and prominent to the listener. Similarly, in the

third section of Hebrews, which extends from the hinge section in 10.19–25 to the close of the letter, the primary theme of divine discourse remains, but many of the patterns noted above are not as consistent. This section will briefly address divine discourse in this section with the aim of comparing it with the first two sections of the epistle. It will also discuss the final quotation of the letter—the human response to divine discourse in Hebrews 13.6.

Hebrews 10.30: “We Know the One Who Said...”

In this section, the first two quotations appear in a pair similar to the one found in Hebrews 2.13. There the author portrays Jesus speaking Isaiah 8.17 and 8.18, but he separates the two otherwise contiguous quotations with another introductory formula (καὶ πάλιν). This disjunction between the two verses raises a question about the source of the first quotation. Comparably in Hebrews 10.30, two quotations appear in succession that *could* be from one passage, but the latter set of words appears in two places in the LXX. The author quotes the beginning of Deuteronomy 32.35 and then uses καὶ πάλιν to introduce a quotation that replicates Greek traditions of both Deuteronomy 32.36a and Psalm 134.14.¹⁶ Since the rhetorical effect of that combination is discussed above (see §3.1.2), here let us turn our attention to the speaker of this quotation who here is referred to as “the one who said” (τὸν εἰπόντα).

This anonymous speaker could be one of two divine participants: (1) the Father or (2) the Spirit. God, often specified as the Father, is the preference for

¹⁶ The text-form in this instance is not relative to our discussion, but it is worth noting that the reading of Deuteronomy 32.35 in Hebrews 10.30 [ἐμοὶ ἐκδίκησις] is not found in any extant Greek traditions, except the quotation by Paul in Romans 12.19; however, it does closely follow the MT, which may suggest another *Vorlage* utilized by these NT authors. For a more thorough discussion, see Allen, *Deuteronomy and Exhortation*, 58–60.

most.¹⁷ Other perceived confirmation for this view comes via the similarity of this introductory formula to the one in Hebrews 5.5; there God is analogously “the one who said to [Jesus], ‘You are my son’” (see §2.2.1). But this conclusion appears to be based primarily on the misguided assumption that the occurrences of divine discourse in Hebrews are not connected, and by extension that the Spirit is not a legitimate speaker within the author’s framework.

In addition to the unconvincing nature of that claim, three additional factors suggest that the Spirit may be the intended speaker in view. The first is the Spirit’s proximity to the quotations. He is the most proximate divine participant (10.29) and speaker (10.16–17). In Hebrews 10.29, the people’s disobedience outrages the Spirit of grace. If the author intends for the reference to the Spirit to continue, then these quotations flow seamlessly from the warning in Hebrews 10.26–29:

How much more severely do you think the one who tramples the Son of God underfoot, who considers common the blood of the covenant by which he has been made holy, and who outrages the Spirit of grace will be punished? For we know [the Spirit] said,

“Vengeance is mine;
I will repay” [Deut 32.35a],
and
“The Lord will judge his people” [Deut 32.36a and/or Ψ 134.14]

The coherence of this passage and its resulting coherence with the depiction of the Spirit in Hebrews as whole is the second reason that he should be the preferred speaker. Namely, if the Spirit is speaking in Hebrews 10.30, then his actions and speech fit well with his characterization elsewhere. For example, in Hebrews 3.7–4.11, the Spirit, second to speaking, is primarily portrayed in response to the community; their disobedience angers him (3.10, 17) and causes him to forbid their

¹⁷ Attridge, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 295; Cockerill, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 491–92; Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 541–42; Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, 295; Koester, *Hebrews*, 453.

entrance into rest (3.11, 18; 4.3, 5). In Hebrews 10.29, those who sin deliberately “outrage” him. Could it be that the declaration of vengeance and recompense in Hebrews 10.30 is illustrative of precisely that? The Spirit himself, as the emphatic construction highlights, will repay the misdeeds of God’s enemies.¹⁸

A concern related to the coherence of reading the Spirit as the speaker is the likelihood that the author detected ambiguity in the base texts of Deuteronomy 32 and Greek Psalm 134. Beginning with the latter, let us note that this psalm exclusively speaks of YHWH in the third person. Thus in its original context, the Father was not the original speaker, and without an explicit introductory formula in Hebrews, there is no reason for him to be the speaker here either. Turning to Deuteronomy 32.35–36, the case is less straightforward. The selected quotation in Hebrews is in first person speech, but throughout Deuteronomy 32, as previously noted (§2.1.3), the person shifts often, making the identification of the speaker at the seams of these shifts rather challenging.

The Hebrew traditions of the Song also differ at several points, but for our purposes, the most noteworthy variation is the addition of the introductory formula (εἰπα), albeit minimal, in 32.26. Rather than having God speak in both the first and third person, Greek traditions introduce an interruption to his speech in which Moses praises God and pledges to act on his behalf (32.26–36). This seems to solve the tension of the shifts in voice, but it introduces tension of another kind; suddenly, words attributed to God in the MT are spoken by Moses, and it is he who pledges to seek recompense from the Israelites enemies. But rather than utilizing this reading,

¹⁸ Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, 295. The perceived identification of these enemies as those who are ethnically non-Israelite would be another difference between the Song and its reading in Hebrews; however, as David M. Allen contends, the potentially disobedient are warned, not the non-Israelites per se (*Deuteronomy and Exhortation*, 58–60).

and as a result perhaps consciously avoiding it, Hebrews identifies another speaker. It is not Moses, but God (Father or Spirit) who communicates these words. This reading relates to the one in Hebrews 3.7–4.11. There the variations between Greek and Hebrew traditions of Psalm 95 [94 LXX] introduce third person speech about YHWH that is spoken by YHWH. This is not problematic on its own by any means, but as we have seen, the author of Hebrews tends to avoid it when possible (see §2.1.4; 3.1.2; 4.1.1). One way he accomplishes this is by having one divine person speak about another. In the readings in Hebrews 10.30, the Spirit is likely the one who speaks about YHWH in the third person.

As for the patterns of divine discourse, this quotation varies only in order. If the author of Hebrews were to begin another cycle of discourse in the third section, then we would expect the Father to speak first, but instead the Spirit is offered the first word. This passage boasts the final mention of the Holy Spirit in Hebrews—whether in 10.29 or 10.30.

Hebrews 10.37–38: “One is Coming”

The next quotation in this section appears within the same paraenetic section as the previous one. Due to the mire of interpretive questions surrounding this passage, our discussion will focus primarily on who speaks the quotation from Habakkuk 2.3–4, as well as a brief reflection on how the quotation relates to the surrounding discourse. The author offers little by way of the introductory formula, which is simply the particle γάρ; however, the prior clauses provide further information about the role of the quotation at this point in the argument:

For you have a need for patience [ὑπομονῆς] so that the by doing the will of God you might receive what was promised. For [γάρ]
 “In still a little while longer,

the one who is coming will arrive
and will not delay;
But my righteous one will live by faith,
And if one shrinks back,
then my soul will not be pleased with [that person].”¹⁹

The speaker of the quotation is not formally introduced, but the first person speech in the latter half suggests that someone is communicating. Further, the expectation is that quotations are spoken, and thus something to the contrary would undoubtedly be signaled. While many connect “what was promised” (lit. just “the promise”; 10.36) to other elements in Hebrews (e.g., rest,²⁰ eternal life,²¹ an unshakable kingdom,²² salvation²³), all of these elements are likely in view here, as they are complementary representations of the author’s eschatology. Nevertheless, the first half of this verse supplies yet another dimension of their hope—the promise of “the one who is coming” (ὁ ἐρχόμενος), now a second time (9.28). The second half communicates what it means to “do the will of God.” This entails living by faith and not shrinking back.

The content of this quotation is essentially a replication of parts of Greek traditions of Habakkuk 2.3–4, but the text-form in Hebrews exhibits a number of variations.²⁴ Here we will deal only with one—three lines (roughly) of the LXX text are transposed in Hebrews:

¹⁹ This is an attempt at an inclusive language translation.

²⁰ Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 553; Koester, *Hebrews*, 461, 467.

²¹ Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, 304.

²² Koester, *Hebrews*, 467.

²³ Attridge, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 301.

²⁴ The other most substantial variation is the fact that ἔτι εἰς καιρὸν reads μικρὸν ὅσον ὅσον. This alteration, also likely at the hand of the author, introduces another text, Isaiah 26.20. In this passage, the people await the Lord, and the fulfillment of the promise that “the dead will rise” (ἀναστήσονται οἱ νεκροί). The advent of the “coming one” and resurrection are the most likely promises to be received (10.36). For more, see T. W. Lewis, “‘...And If He Shrinks Back’ (Heb. 10.38),” *NTS* 22.1 (1975): 88–94; Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic*, 247–53. For more on the text-form, see Gheorghita, *The Role of the Septuagint in Hebrews*, esp. ch. 7.

Quoted Portions
of Habakkuk 2.3–4

Hebrews 10.37–38

A	ἔτι εἰς καιρὸν	A	ἔτι μικρὸν ὅσον ὅσον,
B	ἐρχόμενος ἥξει καὶ οὐ μὴ χρονίση.	B	ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἥξει καὶ οὐ χρονίσει·
C	ἐὰν ὑποστείληται,	E	ὁ δὲ δίκαιός μου ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται,
D	οὐκ εὐδοκεῖ ἡ ψυχὴ μου ἐν αὐτῷ,	C	καὶ ἐὰν ὑποστείληται,
E	ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεώς μου ζήσεται.	D	οὐκ εὐδοκεῖ ἡ ψυχὴ μου ἐν αὐτῷ.

With this transposition of lines, we see that the rearrangement, likely the work of the author of Hebrews, allows for the “one who is coming” and the “one who lives by faith or shrinks back” to be different entities, whereas the LXX text suggests that one agent is in view throughout.²⁵ This differentiation allows for a certainty of the promise—that one will indeed come—while allowing some contingency with regard to the fate of the community. The author offers the negative possibility for those who might shrink back, but he assumes that his readers “are not those who shrink back to destruction but are those who are faithful to the preservation of the soul” (10.39).

Returning to the question of who is speaking, it seems likely that the author intends God, mentioned in 10.36, as the agent. It is his will and promise(s) that initiate the quotation. Nevertheless, this quotation does not appear to be addressed to anyone. God makes this declaration at some unknown time to an unknown audience. In this regard, we find some similarity between this spoken text and the one found in Hebrews 8.8–12; there God declares his desire for a new covenant, and though the Son responds, the Father’s initial speech has no direct address. Even so, the *subject*

²⁵ Attridge, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 302; Cockerill, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 509–10; Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 554; Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, 304; Koester, *Hebrews*, 463–64. The subject of these verbs in the MT is the vision (וִּזְיוֹן), but in the LXX, this is not so. Ὁρασις is feminine, but all of the corresponding words describing the agent are masculine (e.g., αὐτόν; ἐρχόμενος; Cockerill, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 507).

of this discourse does fit the pattern of the Father's other speeches because the Father's speech is not only often directed to the Son, but is also primarily *about* the Son. But the Son, like the Spirit, will speak as a clearly identified speaker no more in Hebrews.

Hebrews 12.5–6: "The Exhortations Addresses You..."

In Hebrews 12.5–6, the author turns to a quotation of Proverbs 3.11–12. This passage deviates substantially from the author's usual pattern in a number of ways. First, he offers this not as the speech of a divine participant, though many attribute these words to the Father;²⁶ instead, this citation is presented as an *exhortation* (παρακλήσις) that addresses "you" (plural) as sons and daughters (ὡς υἱοῖς).²⁷ This passage from Proverbs is about the discipline received by "legitimate" children and is likely linked to suffering that the community is experiencing.²⁸ Why does the author choose to introduce this as an "exhortation" that speaks rather than the speech of God? One clue may come in the author's reference to his own work in Hebrews 13.22. There the author writes: "But I encourage you, brothers and sisters, endure [my] word of exhortation [λόγος τῆς παρακλήσεως], for indeed I have written to you quite briefly." This "word of exhortation" is the author's own correspondence.²⁹ If the author envisions his own writing in this way, then the reference to the proverbial saying as an "exhortation" may suggest that the author is uniquely pointing to a

²⁶ Gareth Cockerill writes, "Although this 'exhortation' speaks of God in the third person, he is its true source. After all he is the one who speaks through all Scripture" (*Epistle to the Hebrews*, 620).

²⁷ Attridge, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 361. I will opt for inclusive language throughout, though I recognize some may prefer "sons" since a discussion of inheritance may be in view.

²⁸ For more on the contemporary situation informed by Hebrews 12, see Dyer, *Suffering in the Face of Death*, esp. chs. 4–5.

²⁹ This parallel is highlighted by Clayton Croy (*Endurance in Suffering: Hebrews 12:1–13 in Its Rhetorical, Religious, and Philosophical Context*, SNTSMS 98 [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998], 195).

specific location in a written text (presumably Proverbs). The words that the author has previously attributed to the Father, Son, and Spirit are the words appropriate to them. They are “characteristic” and would fit the classical definitions of good character development praised in the handbook attributed to Theon (see §1.1.1).

This is not to say that the Father is not able to be the speaker of Proverbs 3 necessarily, as this passage about a Father loving his Son does seem rather apt in light of what the Father *does* say in Hebrews; however, the language of Proverbs 3 refers to God in the third person. Again, this is not unheard of in Hebrews (e.g., 1.6), but more often, third person language about God has triggered a distinct prosopological reading of a passage typically attributed to God the Father. Rather than having God speak in the first person, the passage from Proverbs says of him to the community,

My child, do not make light of the discipline of the Lord,
nor become weary under his correction.
For the Lord disciplines the one whom he loves,
and all legitimate children who accept it.

Another way that this passage develops themes found elsewhere in Hebrews is it further develops the theme of humans being the children of God. This is implicit elsewhere, in my view apart from an anthropological reading of Psalm 8, but here the implicit fraternity between Jesus and his siblings is grounded in a relationship of legitimacy. Humanity is not just claimed by Jesus, but indeed through his disciplinary action, God claims humans as his offspring.

Most strange though is the address in the opening of the passage. The *exhortation* addresses “you” as children. This is particularly strange since the author offers a reading of Proverbs with the personal pronoun, which is *not* found in the LXX text. Further, the author is not beyond emending texts that he encounters. The

filial language found in this passage is remarkable. The Father treats his children as such, but it is the *exhortation* that addresses them. The introductory formula to this verse is offered in the plural, but the address is in the singular. The readers may, as Paul Ellingworth suggests, “[find] no difficulty in understanding Ὁ υἱέ μου...as a generic singular, of scripture addressing them.”³⁰ But is it possible that the author intends for the *community* as a corporate entity to be the addressees of this word? They together function as a “child” of God. This would be distinct within the author’s theology, as he typically refers to individual responsibility within the corporate entity, but this would not be unexpected within Scripture. Israel is also referred to as a singular child of God in Hosea 11.

Since Israel was a child,
and I loved him;
I called the child himself out of Egypt.

This points to action due to the status as a child. The Father loves the child. In this instance, the child is saved, not reprovved, but *both* are characteristic of the paternal relationship. This passage is utilized by Matthew in order to portray Jesus as an ideal and faithful Israelite; however, in its original context, discipline does follow. Hosea 11 offers the foil to Hebrews 11 in that it catalogues that which Israel did “not by faith.” The author may not have Hosea 11 in mind, but the first child of God—the first community whom God called “child”—may be in view. This extends the metaphor of the wandering in the wilderness beyond one generation. To use the author’s own language: if those who not able to enter the land due to unbelief perished in the desert, how much more likely are those who are cast out of it at the

³⁰ Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 647.

exile in need of discipline? This, according to Hebrews, is not a sign of hatred, but of love.

Hebrews 12.25–28: “Do not Refuse the One Who is Speaking”

Within the author’s final major contrast of the first and second covenants, those journeying have come to the “mountain.” They have arrived also at “God, judge of all” (12.23), “Jesus, the mediator,” and most surprisingly, “the sprinkled blood” (12.24). The author could highlight the heavenly tabernacle—the space—in which the blood is offered, but instead focuses on the blood itself. Not only that, but the blood is then personified: it is “speaking better [words] than Abel.”³¹ This leads directly to the author’s next warning: “See to it that you do not refuse the one who is speaking.” This, rather than being a reference to the most proximate speaker (i.e., the blood), seems instead to be a more general reference to any of the authoritative speakers mentioned thus far.³² If a voice addresses “you” from heaven, listen (12.25).³³ An unidentified voice from heaven is then quoted. God (presumably) says, “Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.”³⁴

Hebrews 13.5: “I Will Never Leave You nor Forsake You”

Hebrews 13 is often considered to be dispensable for the argument of the Epistle to the Hebrews. By those who doubt its value, the chapter is at best characterized as an epistolary “postscript” and at worst a spurious attempt to depict the letter as

³¹ The participle λαλοῦντι is in the dative singular, which suggest its subject is αἷματι. The voice may well be Jesus’, but the focus is on the speech of the blood itself.

³² G. Smillie, “‘The One Who Is Speaking’ in Hebrews 12:25,” *TynBul* 55.2 (2004): 275–94.

³³ Curiously, the speech of Jesus is primarily (if not exclusively) located on earth, which makes his blood speaking in heaven even more interesting for an analysis of the “voices” in Hebrews.

³⁴ For more on the eschatology implied through Hebrews 12.25–29, see Mackie, *Eschatology and Exhortation in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 58–77.

“Pauline.”³⁵ My discussion of the next two quotations will illustrate the ways that Hebrews 13 develops the concept of divine speech. These two quotations are the most exceptional with regard to conversation partners and speakers,³⁶ and for this reason, it may be tempting for me to write off these exceptions.

Instead, it is best to think of Hebrews 13 in two ways. First, it summarizes the argument thus far, and second, it applies that argument within ethical exhortations to the community as a whole. The author opens: “Persist in familial love [φιλαδελφία].” From here, he moves to a discussion of hospitality—reintroducing the angels yet again as those who might be entertained unsuspectingly. He advocates for prison ministry and “pure” marriage, yet warns against the love of money. At least the last of these declarations is grounded in the speech of God.

Persist in familial love. Do not neglect hospitality for in this way some have not noticed they were entertaining angels. Remember those in prison as those bound with you, those mistreated as though they were in the same body. Marriage is to be honored by all, and the marriage bed is to be pure, for God judges the immoral and the adulterous. The way of life is not loving money, being content with what you have. For he has said,

“I will never leave you,
nor will I forsake you.”

With this assurance that God will provide for physical needs, the author makes a turn in his portrayal of divine discourse in the Epistle to the Hebrews. God has spoken to his firstborn Son; he has not addressed his other children, though he has treated them as such (12.5–6). But with a simple introductory formula, the author unravels our expectations about God’s conversation partners. Similar to the quotation of Proverbs 3.11–12, the author introduces this with a plural introductory

³⁵ Gareth Cockerill offers a helpful (and more recent) summary of theories (*Epistle to the Hebrews*, 673–76).

³⁶ I am grateful to Nick Brennan for pressing me on the impact of Hebrews 13.5–6 for my proposal. The author’s variation of his theme in this way is indeed significant.

formula, despite the fact that the quotation is addressed to an individual. Is God addressing the corporate group as a single child again? Or is the author personalizing this message to the extent that the plural exhortations that he offers are grounded in a promise extended to each individual? Either reading of the text is certainly possible. At a surface level, the latter is slightly preferable, as a reader would encounter the text in the singular and perhaps internalize this as a direct message from God. Turning to the original context, we find that the closest parallel supports a corporate reading, but another intriguing parallel supports an individual reading. Let us turn to a discussion of the quotation's text-form and original context now.³⁷

Greek traditions of Hebrews 13.5 read: οὐ μή σε ἀνῶ οὐδ' οὐ μή σε ἐγκαταλίπω. Greek Deuteronomy 31.6 is a likely candidate for the base text of this citation as the syntax is an exact match for the quotation:

Hebrews 13.5

Greek Deuteronomy 31.6

οὐ μή σε ἀνῶ οὐδ' οὐ μή σε ἐγκαταλίπω οὐ μή σε ἀνῶ οὔτε μή σε ἐγκαταλίπη

The variations, underlined above, can almost solely be attributed to the change in person. In Greek Deuteronomy 31, Moses is encouraging the Israelites, but is speaking to them with second person singular pronouns. This is also picked up by Greek traditions, where the pronominal suffixes are interpreted as the objective second person pronoun. But the author has not replicated this text-form verbatim, though he could have paraphrased if he wanted to utilize its promise in this form.

³⁷ Other passages are also lexically and syntactically related to this quotation, but are less likely to be in view. For a more thorough discussion, see Allen, *Deuteronomy and Exhortation*, 68–71.

Instead, the author changes the verbs to the first person. With this change, the text-form of the second half finds an exact match in Greek Genesis 28.15:

Hebrews 13.5

οὐ μή σε ἀνῶ οὐδ' οὐ μή σε
ἐγκαταλίπω

Greek Genesis 28.15

οὐ μή σε ἐγκαταλίπω ἕως τοῦ ποιῆσαί
με πάντα, ὅσα ἐλάλησά σοι

God speaks this directly to Jacob after his dream about a ladder reaching from earth to heaven. God promises Jacob descendants and promises not to leave him “until [he does] all the things that [he] spoke to [him]” (originally: ἕως τοῦ ποιῆσαί με πάντα, ὅσα ἐλάλησά σοι).

Discerning whether the author intended this reference to Genesis 28 is challenging. After all, the passage in Deuteronomy implies that a conversation took place where God told Moses in the first person the message that he relays to Israel; could the author not just change the person and then portray this as God’s speech? (This is certainly possible, though it raises a question about whether this is indeed a “quotation” or an interpretation of the quotation.) If, however, the author is intentionally referring to Genesis 28, then the context is striking. God promises Jacob the land, something that will take generations to accomplish, but assures him that he will never depart from him in the meantime. Jacob is promised something that those after him will see come to fruition. This is precisely the relationship between those described in Hebrews 11 and those who actually obtain the promise, as depicted by the author. He writes of them, “All of these people who were all approved because of their faith, did not receive the promise, since God provided something better for us, so that without us they would not be perfected.” For the previous generations and perhaps also the present community, the final culmination

of the promise is still ahead, but God promises: “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”³⁸

Hebrews 13.6: “We Confidently Say...”

Immediately following God’s speech, we hear the addressees speak. Rather than explaining God’s quotation and moving forward, the author moves directly to the other side of the conversation. The addressees of God’s speech, whether individual or corporate, now lend their voice:

So then we confidently say,
 “The Lord is my helper;
 I will not be afraid.
 What can humanity do to me?”

This quotation of Greek Psalm 117.6 matches the LXX text verbatim, apart from a variant reading with a *καί* to separate the first two clauses. This psalm praises God for remaining with the speaker during a time of persecution.³⁹

Setting aside the text itself, let us consider the distinctive nature of this quotation. To this point in Hebrews, only three named characters (and one unnamed in Hebrews 2.6–8) speak in a timeless way, re-contextualizing Scripture. The three characters who have participated in this verbal conversation are the Father, Son, and Spirit—those whom the author appears to regard as “God.” But here at Hebrews 13.6, the children of God speak back. Together “we” confidently say: “The Lord is my helper...” If the author has arranged his depictions of divine discourse in the intentional and patterned way suggested throughout this study, then this deviation

³⁸ As Attridge notes, “our author construes the text, as he had Ps 95, as a word addressed to his contemporaries” (*Epistle to the Hebrews*, 389).

³⁹ Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 700–701. This passage also references to the “stone that the builders rejected” (117.22). In 1 Peter 2.6–8 this passage is paired with Isaiah 28.16 and Isaiah 8.14 to describe Jesus. The latter is just after the selection of Isaiah 8 spoken by Jesus in Hebrews 2.12–13.

from his usual plan requires examination. Up to this point, the Father has spoken to the Son about his identity and mission; the Son has spoken to the Father in praise and about his willing participation on behalf of his brothers and sisters; and the Spirit has relayed the salient details of this conversation to the community. He warns against unbelief and promises forgiveness.

If only the speech of Hebrews were examined apart from its new context within the author's argument, then these three speakers may seem rather disjunctive; however, the author in his own voice connects the work and words of each character, demonstrating how all the pieces come together to result in the people's perfection. Hebrews 13.5, where God speaks, offers a potential summary of the divine discourse throughout the text. If the community knows that God will not abandon his promises, then the Son will indeed lead them to glory through his perfect and perfecting sacrifice, and the promises *and* punishments spoken by God or discussed by the author will remain effective. The author portrays humanity responding to this promise. But as with the last two quotations, the plural introductory formula leads to a quotation that refers to the community in the singular. *We* say, "The Lord is *my* helper." Each individual responds to God's assurance.

Most striking is the placement of this speech. When each individual responds, as the author suggests, that voice is the last to be heard in Hebrews. The Epistle has not come to a close, but its speech, divine and human, has now ended. Having been invited to listen to a conversation between Father and Son for several chapters, being spoken to only by the Holy Spirit, when God speaks to the community at last, they speak back. Their confident participation in the divine

conversation is the culmination. If they are “not afraid,” then they truly are among those who do not “shrink back” (10.38).

For “Tomorrow”

Now that the “today” of this study is near a close, I find myself with an unanswered question. Assuming that the author has intentionally crafted the speech of these three characters in Hebrews, and assuming that the patterns that I have identified in the first two sections are valid, then why do the Son and Spirit speak almost nowhere in the third section? A brief survey of Hebrews 10.26–13.25 also yields few mentions of these characters. Both are referenced in 10.29. The Son is notably presented as the “Forerunner and Perfecter of Faith” in Hebrews 12.2, as “the same yesterday, today, and forever” (13.8), and as the one “brought back from the dead” in 13.20, but any extended focus on these characters is not there.⁴⁰ The shift to ethics and community-focused argumentation may account for the change; however, the Son and Spirit are typically included in these elements prior to the third section.

Perhaps the author moves from speaking about these three characters in relatively distinct ways to a more unified discussion of “God” in Hebrews 10.26–13.25. The author continues to use “God” to refer to the Father, of course (e.g., 13.20), but some references to “God” are not necessarily limited. This was also the case in Hebrews 4.12–13, where the “word of God” could appropriately refer to the speech of any of the three characters that spoke prior to that point. As the hinge between two sections with three speaking divine characters, this is almost certainly

⁴⁰ Christopher A. Richardson argues that Hebrews 11 is an “encomium on Jesus.” While I am hesitant to make this the primary function of the chapter, his argument for the presence of this literary form is persuasive. See *Pioneer and Perfecter of Faith*, ch. 3.

the case. If not, then the most proximate speaker is the Spirit, and he would be a more likely reference in that specific instance.

Other points in this section where the reference to God becomes even more vague may also suggest this conclusion. For example, the Spirit is the most likely speaker in Hebrews 10.30, but he is not named. Instead the author introduces this with the formula, “We know the one who said...” The next speech is introduced by a simple γάρ. Then in Hebrews 12, the speaker is simply as “the one who is speaking” and the “voice who warns from heaven” (a location where the author *explicitly* locates two divine characters). The discussion of Proverbs 3 reasonably points to the Father as the subject, but neither of the other divine characters is featured as the speaker, though the Spirit in particular would be an appropriate choice.

In Hebrews 13.5, when “God” speaks, he speaks uncharacteristically to the community. Additionally, similar language to Deuteronomy 28.16, an uncertain base text, is also found within the Servant’s Song in Isaiah 42.16. There the Servant says, “I will not forsake them” (οὐκ ἐγκαταλείψω αὐτούς). This text has the potential for another prosopological reading by the author, and these features together suggest a unity among the speakers at last. The author takes a designation that could refer to all three and portrays them speaking with one voice.

5.5. Conclusion

The third section of Hebrews is not without divine discourse or prosopological exegesis, but citations and discussions of quoted material occupy a much smaller percentage at this stage in the author’s argument. This section has summarized the few instances of divine discourse and a single instance of human discourse in

Hebrews 10.19–13.25. I proceeded through a description of the passages themselves as well as their connection to the instances of divine discourse that we have discussed thus far.

This chapter also has shown how divine discourse contributes to the structure of Hebrews. Looking to previous structural proposals, the tripartite model of Wolfgang Nauck offers a helpful framework for discussing quotations in Hebrews, since in the first two major sections a number of significant patterns are present. The Father, Son, and Spirit each speak in a set order with a set conversation partner and aim. When the author enters his final section, where the offering has taken place, the pilgrimage has ended, and the community requires instruction, the “living” words of God need to accomplish something different.

Hebrews 10.30 depicts the Spirit offering an assurance of the Lord’s judgment through his two quotations. This coheres with his depiction elsewhere, but it already breaks the pattern of speech as we would likely expect the Father’s words. In the quotation of Habakkuk 2.3–4 in Hebrews 10.37–38, God now speaks. He heralds the “coming one,” while also expressing his displeasure in those who “shrink back.” The next speech in Hebrews 12.5–6 is not necessarily divine discourse, despite its typical classification as such. Instead, this passage is an exhortation that “addresses” humanity or individual humans as “child.” Encouraging the audience, the exhortation assures that discipline is the act of a *true* Father. The final two speeches in this section are the most exceptional in Hebrews. God, perhaps specifically God the Father, speaks to people. He emphatically promises not to depart from them. Finally, the last voice heard in Hebrews is human. “We” say in response to God’s word: “I will not be afraid.” These speeches reach their apex in speech between God and humanity. After God pledges not to disappear before the

fulfillment of his promise, the community says “confidently,” “The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can humanity do to me?” The speech in this section is primarily oriented toward the community in a way that the previous sections are not. Though not every speech is addressed to the people, even passages like Habakkuk 2.3–4 have humanity in view as those who “live by faith” or “shrink back” (10.37–38). These spoken quotations, while distinct, further contribute to the primacy of speech in Hebrews. Words are powerful—and active (ἐνεργής)—for the author of Hebrews; they are spoken and yet they speak.

6. Conclusion

Greek Proverbs 30.4 begins: “All God’s words [are] burning with fire [πεπυρωμένοι].” This imagery suggests a reference to refining materials in a flame. The participle could be read as passive, suggesting that God’s words are “purified,” or it could be read as middle, suggesting that God’s words *purify*. The proverb’s focus on human behavior suggests the latter is in view; however, God’s words are pure, and they also purify. In the same way, the words of God are set aflame in the Epistle to the Hebrews. By depicting these texts with new “faces” in new contexts, the author of Hebrews fans the blaze. The relevancy of these words for the contemporary community are made explicit: they are a word for “today.” Further, the author’s depiction of the word as that which exacts and exposes yet gives hope portrays the desire to “purify” his readers through the words of God.

This study progressed through a discussion of the author’s exegetical method and my own assumptions to a demonstration of how speech attributed to the Father, Son, and Spirit is carefully arranged and selected by the author of Hebrews to communicate something cohesive and “characteristic” about each speaker that he calls “God.” Finally, I showed how the content in the author’s third section challenges some of those more predictable portrayals and in doing so advances not only the argument but also his theology of divine discourse. What would we say after all if “God” never spoke to us? This conclusion will summarize salient features

of each chapter in turn, resuming a topical arrangement for my discussion of the Father, Son, and Spirit.

The Author's Cast of Characters

One of the concerns of this study is to discern who speaks and to whom at what points in Hebrews. In my own attempts to identify the characters participating within the author's text, I have imitated his primary reading strategy—prosopological exegesis. With the author's readings, he looks to various Greek texts of Scripture and identifies or utilizes their ambiguities and tensions in order to create a new reading. With his collection of readings, Hebrews yields a unified depiction of its divine characters. Whether the author envisioned himself solving classic ancient exegetical debates of his era or not, he often attests a fresh reading of a Jewish text, some of which were highly influential in later centuries (e.g., his reading of Psalm 110.4). The author's use of prosopological exegesis confirms his connection to Greco-Roman culture, as the techniques found in his work mirror that of classical orators and educators. Creating consistent characters within a composition and identifying another author's established characters was common rhetorical practice at that time.

Moreover, Hebrews is not alone in utilizing this technique in the New Testament. The Gospels, Pauline literature, Acts, and 1 Peter all attest to the method, but what the author does do distinctly is to center so much of his discussion around these speeches and to depict the Father, Son, and Spirit all speaking and interacting. Elsewhere Jesus is a common addressee or subject in prosopological readings, but he is rarely a speaker in this corpus (as, e.g., in Acts 2.25–28). The Spirit is nowhere else a character in New Testament prosopological exegesis. The use of this

technique in Hebrews is ubiquitous and methodical and exceptional. It is central to the author's portrayal of God because God confirms the author's characterization himself.

This method becomes prominent in patristic literature, where the language of *πρόσωπον* and *persona* is explicitly used to signal the technique. Identifying participants within Jewish Scripture offers these writers the opportunity to show consistency in God's actions and to prove the Son's existence prior to his human birth—even speaking through the Psalmist suggests that he lives at that time and can lend his voice. The use of prosopological exegesis also became key for discussions of Trinitarian theology in the fourth century, particularly in the work of Tertullian. He reasons that a conversation among Father, Son, and Spirit proves their distinctiveness.

Since this method is later used to defend orthodox Trinitarianism, its presence in Hebrews is intriguing for the theologically-minded. If the author uses a method (on a text) that Tertullian claims proves that the three are “distinct, but not separate” (*Prax.* 11), then may we infer that in Hebrews' theology also? My intention in this study has not been to show how each individual reading offers something explicitly “Trinitarian,” but instead to show that the “grammar” of Hebrews—the “logic”—is consistent with later developments in theology. Hebrews revolves around three main characters who speak and interact and work on behalf of humanity; these remarkable characters speak in distinct ways, and yet they all participate in crucial dialogue that moves the author's argument forward. Their conversation at times takes place within the divine identity; the Father and Son participate in intra-divine discourse. At other times their conversation extends to

humanity; the Spirit (and later God) participates in extra-divine discourse. Let us turn now to the discourse of each of these divine characters.

The Father Who Loves

The first speaker is the Father. He is initially depicted speaking in the opening to the Epistle, and in Hebrews 1.5, he makes his first speech, “You are my Son; today I have begotten you.” With this quotation and the next, the Father reveals his connection to the “Son.” Psalm 2.7 and 2 Samuel 7.14 create a reciprocal depiction of their relationship where they are wholly Father and Son. The Son being begotten “today” highlights his eternality—there was never a time when he was not.

Additionally, he is worthy of worship from the angels when he enters the heavenly realm, as confirmed by the Father’s identification of the Son as the one to be venerated in a quotation of Deuteronomy 32.43 (Heb 1.6). The Son is timeless, “from the beginning” (1.10–12), and his reign is “forever” (1.8–9). As a symbol of the enduring effectiveness of his priestly work, he now sits at the right hand of the Father (1.13). In each of these ways the Son is superior to the angels. None among them is individually qualified to be “son of God.” They are mutable, able to be changed to wind and flame (1.7). They are ministering spirits on behalf of humanity (1.13). Hebrews 1 depicts the Father speaking to the Son in a way that he could not reasonably speak to anyone else. This speech correlates the Son with other intermediaries, such as the Logos and Sophia, but shows his superiority as one who is called “God” and “Lord” by the Father himself.

The aim of the Father’s speech in Hebrews 5 and 7 is not initially to distance the Son from all others. The prior presentation of the Son’s contrast with the angels is by no means void, but now the author shows how the Son *is* like some among his

companions—the priests. Apart from his genealogy, he is qualified to offer on behalf of humanity in accordance with the Law. But he is not a Levitical high priest. The author introduces another figure to whom the Son corresponds—Melchizedek, whose characterization he develops through use of various Jewish traditions. This mysterious figure is never clearly situated within the divine or human realm, but he is a priest like Christ in that he remains. First, God calls the Son to be a high priest through the combination of Psalm 2.7 and Psalm 109.4 (“You are priest forever in the likeness of Melchizedek”) in Hebrews 5.5–6. With this speech, he makes an everlasting oath and establishes an enduring priesthood with a high priest who lives forever. In Hebrews 7, the re-citations of Psalm 109.4 (7.17, 21) serve now to differentiate the Son from the Levitical high priests.

In Hebrews 8.8–12, the Father speaks again. This declaration of Greek Jeremiah 38.31–34 is the longest quotation of any in the NT, though the author does not immediately offer extended comment on its content. But the words of God are sufficient. They reveal, “Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant...” When this new covenant is announced, the “old” covenant becomes obsolete. It is due to finding fault with the prior priests that the author “seeks a place for a second” (8.7–8). The author has revealed the superior high priest who is capable of serving within this second covenant in Hebrews 7, and in this opening to this quotation in Hebrews 8, we learn that it is also “legislated on better promises” (8.6).

In the final section of Hebrews, God, identified by a more general designation (ὁ θεός), speaks again. If the author envisions a single character as the primary speaker in these instances, it is probably the Father and thus we recount that speech here. In Hebrews 10.37–38, he speaks Habakkuk 2.3–4. He announces a

“coming one” who will not delay. These verses ground the author’s call to persevere. First, he assures them that they will have a short wait; second, that the righteous are those who live by faith—“evidence of things not being seen” (11.1). God’s final speech is directed to humanity: “I will never leave you nor forsake you” (13.5).

The unifying thread for the Father’s speech in Hebrews appears to be love on behalf of his children. He loves through revealing his Son in Hebrews 1 and 5 and through creating and establishing a priesthood and covenant that each in part offer humanity access to him in Hebrews 7 and 8. The Father speaks primarily to his Son. He commends him and addresses him with titles of honor (“Son,” “God,” “Lord,”), and he calls him to the role of high priest. When the Father speaks in Hebrews 8, he heralds his plan on behalf of humanity, a plan that only his Son is capable of fulfilling. In his final two speeches, even outside the first two sections of Hebrews, the Father loves through offering humanity confidence. Their suffering is temporary, and God will never depart from them.

The Son Who Serves

The fulfillment of God’s promise is also conditioned upon the work of another character in the epistle—the Son. He is introduced through the Father’s words, but then speaks for himself. Just prior to the Son’s speech, the author interprets Psalm 8. His reading is anthropological in the sense that a singular *human* representative will restore humanity to its original standing with God from creation; however, it is christological in the sense that the human representative, according to Hebrews as a whole, can only be Christ. The singular “Son” leads the many other sons and daughters to glory (2.10). The speaker of the author’s quotation of Psalm 8 is

anonymous. This may be the author's attempt to remove any human voice until Hebrews 13.6, or it may be his attempt to allow this human speaker to speak on behalf of all humanity. This person, who in anonymity could be any gender, nationality, or class, is analogous to the ideal human representative in the psalm, but instead is the representative human speaker.

After this quotation, the author continues to establish the Son's solidarity with humanity—his brothers and sisters. To demonstrate that the Son is not ashamed of his human siblings, the author portrays him speaking Greek Psalm 21.23 to the Father. He says, "I will proclaim your name among my brothers and sisters..." This quotation is taken from a chapter with a rich history of early Christian interpretation, especially in the Synoptics, but the author of Hebrews quotes from a verse that others do not. Rather than the description of the speaker's suffering in 21.1–19, Hebrews quotes from a portion where the speaker awaits rescue and pledges to praise God when he is delivered (21.20–32). The context of the original psalm suggests that the author is emphasizing the Son's fraternity in the midst of his earthly suffering. His suffering and death are not just part of his saving work, but part of his identification with humanity also.

Next the author quotes from Isaiah 8. He takes two contiguous verses 8.17 and 8.18 and separates them with one of his preferred introductory formulas. As we have seen, the first verse matches several others verbatim also. The author may only be quoting Isaiah 8.17, "I will put my trust in him," but he may also be introducing the background of other texts. One option, 2 Kingdoms 22.3, has a similar context to Psalm 21.23 and thus may lend continuity to the author's quotations. It may also ensure that readers continue to hear the words of the *earthly* Jesus who awaits release. A second option, Isaiah 12.2, praises God for his merciful actions toward

the speaker. Each of these contexts lends another layer of richness to the author's quotation, but we can not know for certain if either of these additional texts are intended.

The clear base-text, Isaiah 8, is one that also is found in other early Christian literature, such as Pauline and Petrine material (Rom 9.33; 1 Pet 2.8). The Greek tradition of this base text differs substantially from the MT, which raises several questions about how the author understands this slightly ambiguous text and what clues he has gleaned from its Greek version. What does seem likely is the author capitalizes here on the depiction of two lords interacting. This tension in the Greek along with the faithfulness of the speaker make the passage a fitting choice for the author of Hebrews. These words are characteristic of Jesus.

After the pledge to put his trust in God, the Son says, "Behold, here I am and the children whom God has given me." The Son stands before the Father with humanity. He assents to their inclusion within the family of God. Since this verse appears in the present tense, whereas the prior is in the future, a question of timing is raised. Does something occur between these two verses? Though the Son might be rescued prior to the point that he says, "Here I am," he may also remain in wait for the Father, in faithful anticipation. The Son calls humanity his brothers and sisters, and he stands with them, presenting them alongside himself.

The Son's next speech is attested in Greek Psalm 39.7–9. This quotation comes at a point in the author's discourse where the Father has revealed his desire for a new covenant and where the author has described how the first and second orders relate, but in Hebrews 10.5–7, the Son is quoted "coming into the world." He says to the Father,

“Sacrifice and offering you did not desire,
but a body you prepared for me.
You were not pleased with whole burnt offerings and sin offerings.
Then I said, ‘Here I have come—
as it is written about me in the scroll of the book—
to do your will, O God.’”

The text-form of this quotation has several variations from the LXX text, but most of the variations can be attributed to the author or have such divided manuscript evidence that a conclusion cannot be reached. When the author does alter his text, he introduces features that further highlight the prominence of this passage within his discourse, making the already striking speech of the Son a climactic point, particularly in aural encounters with the text.

The Son’s statement that the Father “did not desire” prior offerings raises some theological questions, but as we have seen, it seems likely that God was dissatisfied with the results of the prior offerings, rather than the offerings themselves. These offerings were not a self-offering, which suggests they were not a *willing* offering. Their effects could not last, and the offerings could not offer perfection, which likely refers to “resurrection life.” After Jesus died, he was saved “out of death” by the Father. This were part of his “perfection.” Thus, with this quotation the Son reveals his primary intent for his journey to earth—to make an offering that *can* perfect the worshipper; he has come to do God’s will. His self-offering in one sense stands within the tradition of Levitical offerings, but as an enduring high priest in the likeness of Melchizedek, who did not have to make offerings on behalf of his own sin, this offering is efficacious. It supplants the previous system.

The common thread among the Son’s speeches is his service. In Hebrews 2, his need for rescue and praise in solidarity with his brothers and sisters cannot be

separated from the context of his life-giving offering. He had to suffer, be tempted, and die in order to serve as their merciful and faithful high priest (2.17). In Hebrews 10, the Son makes clear that he desires to offer himself to the Father on behalf of humanity. This is coherent with the depiction of the Son throughout Hebrews as one who is forerunner of humanity—in suffering, the path to glory, and faith. Hebrews presents Jesus as a full participant in the life of each person’s suffering (4.15).

The Spirit Who Exhorts and Admonishes

Before we discuss the remarkable nature of what the Spirit says in Hebrews, let us recall that the fact that the Spirit speaks words also attested in Scripture at all is noteworthy within the New Testament. Nonetheless, despite earlier skepticism regarding the Spirit’s significance in Hebrews, recent years have witnessed fresh inquiries into the question. These recent studies conclude that the Spirit is a fundamental character within the author’s discourse. This study advances this discussion by showing that the Spirit’s speech is not isolated to its context in Scripture. The Spirit speaks in precisely the same way as the Father and Son, though his voice and the character revealed by his words are distinct.

In Hebrews 3–4, the Spirit speaks Psalm 94.7–11 to the community. His conversation partner is thus not one of the divine characters in Hebrews; his discourse is “extra-divine.” One way to confirm that the author interpreted Psalm 94 by means of prosopological exegesis is to see if the base text introduces an ambiguity or tension that necessitates another speaker. As we have seen various clues, such as the reference to YHWH in the third person, offer the potential, and perhaps necessity, for this reading strategy to be employed. The author of Hebrews uses this along with some alterations to the text of Psalm 94 in order to highlight

God's graciousness in the midst of the wilderness generation's egregious rebellion. If the quotation is attributed to the Spirit, then the actions and attributes ascribed to him by the author may seem strange if we operate primarily within the realm of New Testament pneumatology; however, the author's depiction often coheres with Jewish literature (e.g., the Spirit's connection with rest and the wilderness) and sometimes with other New Testament literature as well (e.g., the Spirit's response to humanity). The recollection of Isaiah 63 appears to be a key text that has influenced more of the New Testament than has previously been acknowledged. With this intertextual evidence in place, we can conclude that the author selected the Spirit as the speaker of Psalm 94 in accordance with his own existing cognitive framework and the external influences of that framework.

The Spirit's speech continues throughout Hebrews 3.7–4.11, being repeated at regular intervals to ground the author's discussion. The author uses it within the discourse, first, to show how the wilderness generation failed in their attempts to enter rest (3.12–19) and, second, to show how the promise to enter still remains (4.1–11). In the midst of this second section, the author begins to depict the community on their own journey. They are at present within the desert and must continue forward. They must "make every effort to enter that rest" (4.11). This depiction further develops the role of the Spirit as one who guides the people. The Spirit's traditional association with the pillar of cloud and fire offers this possibility, which is fitting in Hebrews given his preferred dialogue partner.

The Spirit's second speech occurs relatively soon after the Son's. The Son has voiced his willing participation in his self-offering, and after making clear how effective Christ's offering is, the author transitions to the Spirit's speech. It is used as evidence that "by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being

made holy” (10.14). The Spirit “testifies” the words of Jeremiah 38.31–34 again, but this time only re-cites the salient portions that summarize the promises of the New Covenant. The Spirit in this way includes humanity within a conversation that they would otherwise only overhear. Also through the use of this quotation, the author connects the enduring quality of Christ’s sacrifice and its forgiveness with the fact that further sacrifices are no longer needed. The Spirit’s speech enables him to make the claim that their previous ritual practice is no longer in effect.

The author alters the text-form of this quotation and adds an additional allusion to Exodus 34. With the latter he suggests that this is not a clean break with the first covenant necessarily, but is a divergent moment of renewal. These changes also create a distance between the declaration of the covenant from the Father and this one from the Spirit. This relative distance between two quotations of the same text suggests that the author has deliberately chosen each speaker to speak a distinct message within his discourse. The Spirit speaks his message to the community.

In the third section of Hebrews, the Spirit may also speak the quotations in Hebrews 10.30 of Deuteronomy 32.35 and Deuteronomy 32.36/Psalm 134.14. These quotations, though typically attributed to the Father follow directly from the author’s mention of the Spirit’s response to deliberate sin. These quotations, like so many others in Hebrews, offer the Scriptural basis for the author’s claim. The Spirit will be outraged for we know he has said he will avenge injustice.

The common thread throughout the Spirit’s speeches is his exhortation and admonishment to the community, a point illustrated well by the author’s use of Psalm 94 in Hebrews 3.7–4.11. With a single text the author admonishes the previous generation and encourages the current, though the less than subtle warnings for those who fall away are also present. The Spirit with his speech makes clear the

consequences of one's response to God. If someone continues to draw near and to make effort to progress, then the Spirit encourages that person to continue and offers the promises of the New Covenant. If someone does not continue and falls away, then the Spirit's outrage, anger, and vengeance are sure to follow. The Spirit is thus closely linked with the community. He testifies about God (2.4); he is a sign of salvation (6.4); and he makes clear the relationship between the tabernacle of their ancestors and the heavenly tabernacle (9.8). The Spirit in Hebrews coheres well with the Paraklete of John's Gospel. He is an advocate, closely tied with the community, who reveals the things to come.

Three Divine Speakers and the Argument of Hebrews

The formal structure of the Epistle to the Hebrews is difficult to determine. The author moves among his themes freely and uses various techniques, sometimes seemingly contradictory and/or overlapping, to craft his discussion. Two structural proposals that appear most common among modern interpreters split the text into three or five parts. The prior should be preferred on the basis of the two major hinge sections in Hebrews 4.11–16 and 10.19–25. These sections offer a major turn in the discussion at the point that they occur, and they also relate to one another with several lexical and syntactic parallels. This structural proposal works well with the focus of this study on divine discourse. The speech of the Father, Son, and Spirit does not appear at random in Hebrews. The author inserts not only speech that is fitting for the character, but in the first two sections also orders their speech in a specific pattern. First, the Father speaks to the Son. Second, the Son speaks to the Father. Third, the Spirit speaks to the community. Since the author's argument hinges so much on these quotations, it is striking that these patterns also emerge. Is

it possible that these speeches were decided near the starting point of his development of each section?

As we have seen, the author opens with the Father's description of the Son in Hebrews 1. After progressing through the catena and then through a discussion of Psalm 8, he moves into the Son's speech about his relationship to humanity. The Son's speech falls within the author's section on his earthly life and his death on behalf of humanity. Then, the author introduces a comparison between Jesus and Moses. They are both "leaders" (ἀρχηγοί), but Jesus is faithful as a Son. Further, those who followed Moses fell down dead in the desert. This discussion leads to the Spirit's speech. Those within God's household "hold fast to [their] confidence and hope," for they "do not harden [their] hearts." The author of Hebrews uses the Spirit's quotation to warn and to exhort, which leads directly into the hortatory hinge between the first and second sections (4.11–16). The Spirit's exhortations are structurally bound together with the author's.

This hinge section leads into the author's discussion of the Levitical priesthood. He describes that which is true of every high priest. Most important in these qualifications is their ability as humans to serve on behalf of humanity. Additionally, all high priests are "called," a claim the author substantiates on the basis of one calling in particular. With the combination of Psalm 2.7 and Psalm 109.4, the author depicts God's calling of Jesus to priestly ministry. These two passages substantiate his priesthood upon the whole catena in chapter one, closely linking the Father's speech in these two sections. The author then proceeds to an extended hortatory section in the middle about the discouraging state of the community, but assures them through the promise and oath to Abraham—God will follow through. The "oath" to Abraham leads the author to a discussion of the oath

that initiated the priesthood of Jesus—in the likeness of Melchizedek. The Father recites Psalm 109.4 again and again throughout Hebrews 7. This new priesthood is enacted within a new covenant, which the author reveals through the Father’s speech of Jeremiah 38 in Hebrews 8.8–12. This is the Father’s main speech within the section, both in length and its clear connection to the speech of the Son and Spirit to follow. After the Father’s speech, the author shows how the first and second covenants relate to one another. The author was by no means capricious in enacting something “new” because the first covenant offered a glimpse of what was to come (10.4). The success of this new covenant is predicated upon the work of the Son. In his speech in this section, Christ commits to offer himself in accordance with God’s will. Finally, the Spirit speaks again, confirming the promises of the new covenant and by extension the efficacy of Christ’s offering.

The third section of Hebrews contains a number of exceptions to the pattern above, but it is not without consistency. In this section the Spirit likely speaks first in Hebrews 10.30, warning the community. He and the Son do not speak again. Next, God speaks heralding the “coming one” and offering a general expectation for those who live “by faith.” Then, an exhortation speaks Proverbs 3. This passage is not an instance of divine discourse, though it is often interpreted as such. God’s final speech occurs in Hebrews 13.5 where he assures the audience of his eternal presence. This confidence spurs “us” to respond in Hebrews 13.6 as individuals. Therefore, “I” am the final speaker in Hebrews.

Nevertheless, elsewhere the Epistle to the Hebrews primarily presents an encounter with a God who speaks. Through his presentation of Scripture as God’s speech, the author of Hebrews offers a theology that is crafted by the words of God himself. This theology offers a depiction of the Father, Son, and Spirit each speaking

in diverse ways, while still interacting with another both verbally and nonverbally. Divine discourse in Hebrews is regular and regulated; that is, it appears in a patterned and intentioned way. This study elucidates the author's characterization of God through his use of Scripture by means of prosopological exegesis. Let us not "neglect" to give attention in our scholarship on Hebrews to "the one who is speaking" (Heb 12.24).

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